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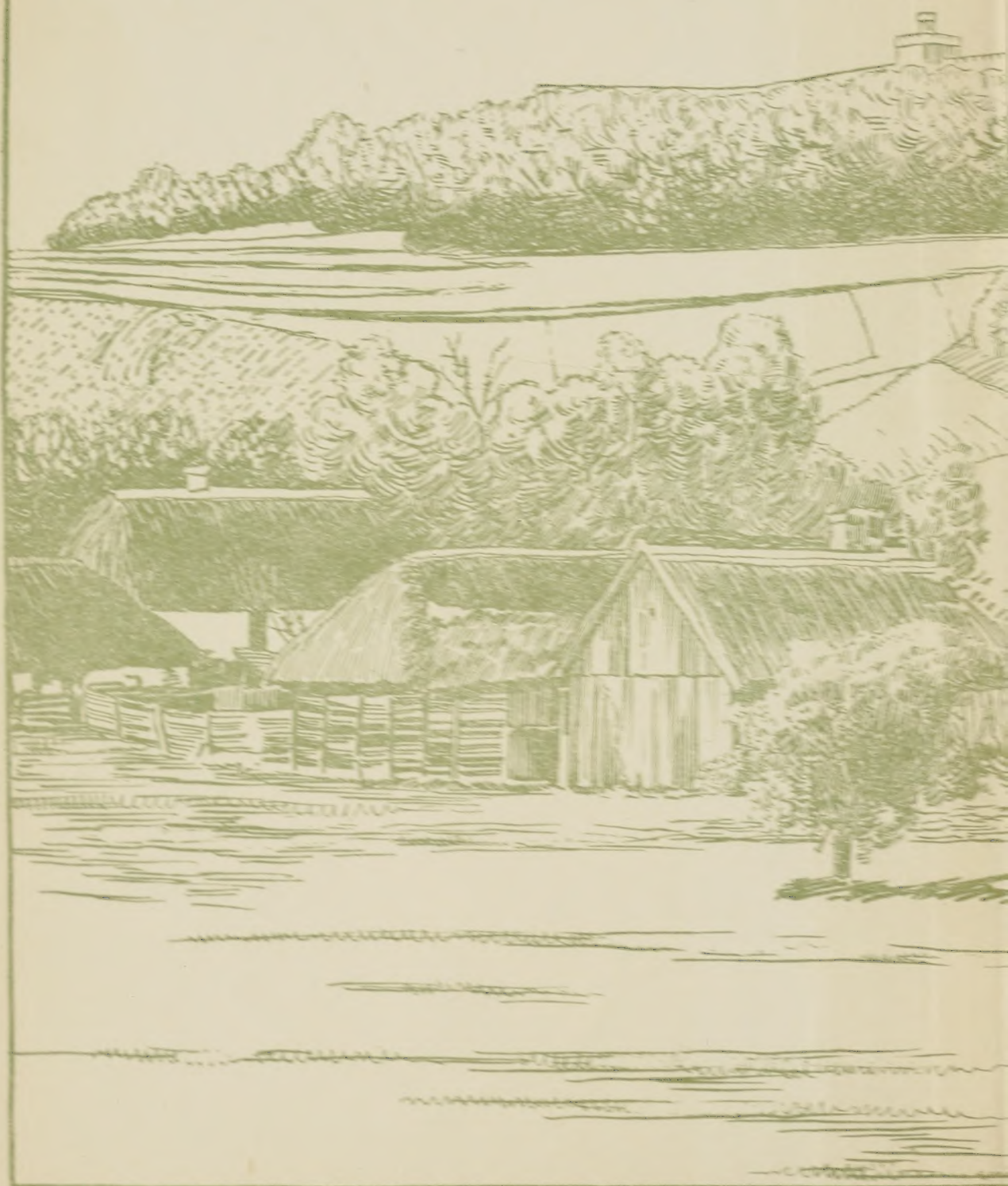
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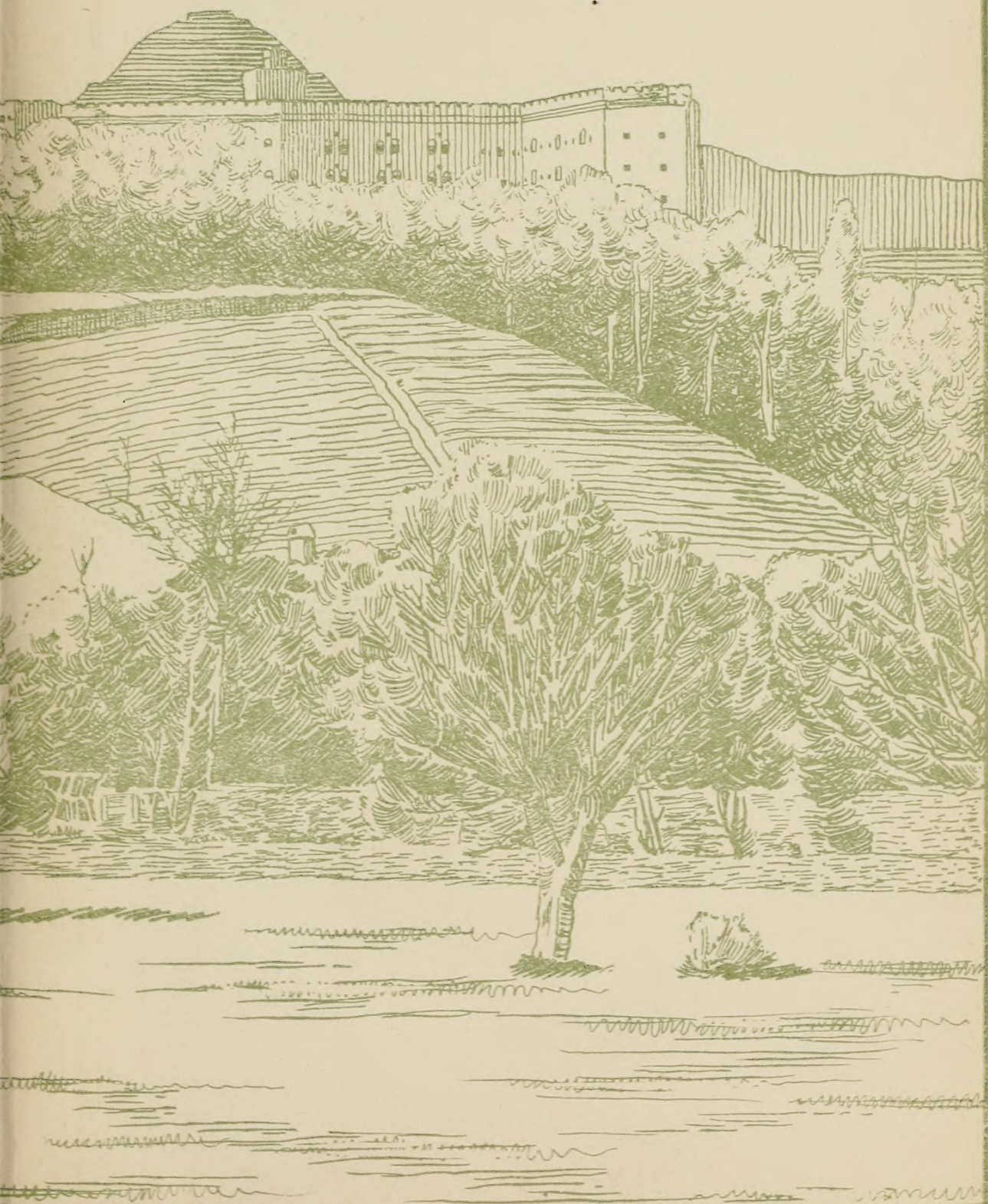
NEVIN O. WINTER



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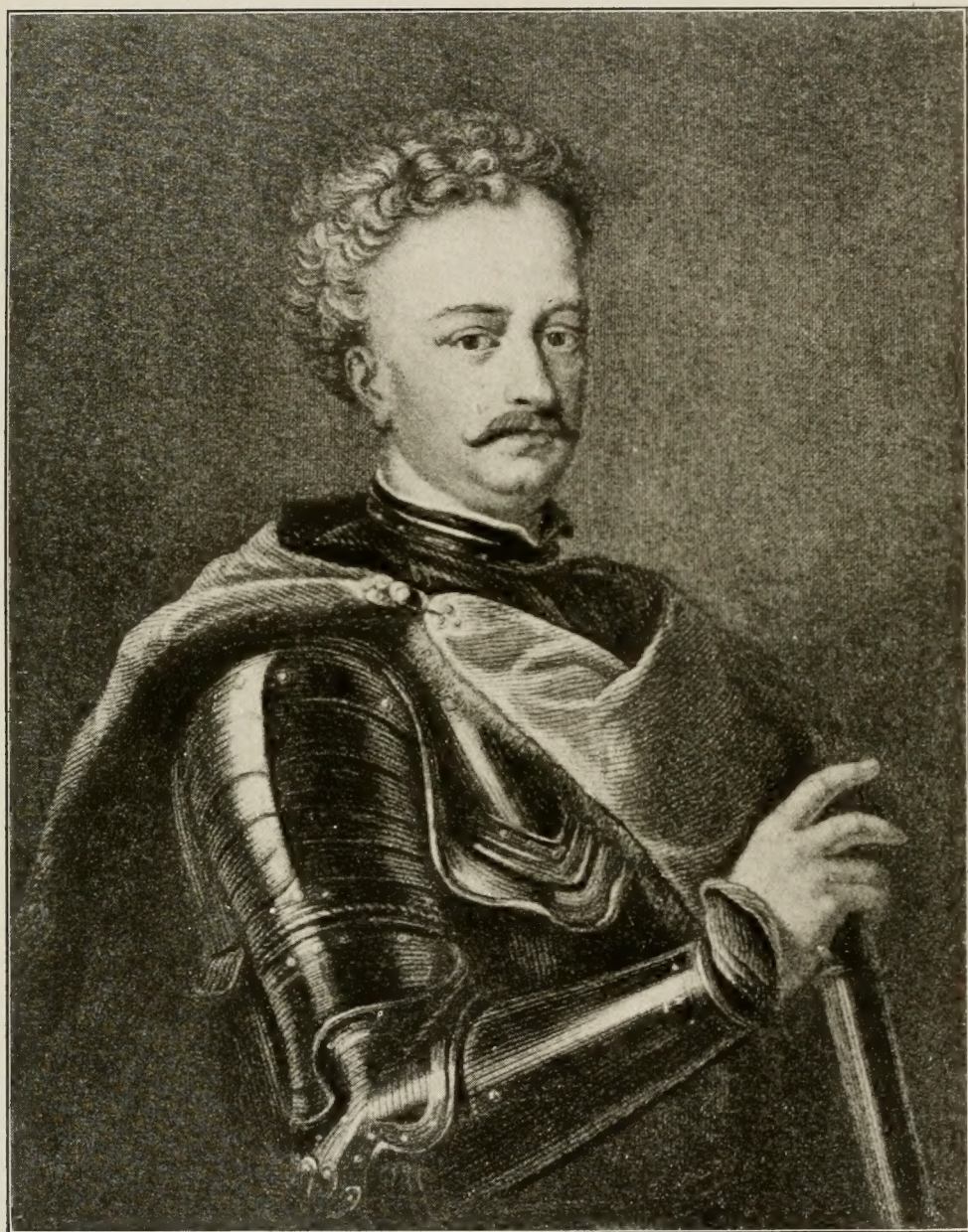
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JOHN SOBIESKI (*see page 67*).

Poland of To-Day and Yesterday

A Review of its History, past and present, and
of the Causes which resulted in its Partition,
together with a survey of its social, polit-
ical, and economic conditions, to-day

By

Nevin O. Winter


Author of "Mexico and Her People of To-Day,"
"Brazil and Her People of To-Day," "The
Russian Empire of To-Day and
Yesterday," etc.

Illustrated



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PREFACE

THE doctrine of individualism has many adherents to-day, and its numbers seem to be on the increase. These devotees believe, or claim to believe, that the absolute freedom of action of the individual is of more importance than the welfare of organized society. To this school of sentimentalists the author would recommend a study of Poland and the causes that led to her downfall.

Individualism had been developed in Poland to the highest degree among those representing the privileged classes. Although the nobles did not number one-twentieth of the total population, they assumed to themselves all the prerogatives of government and ignored the claims of the great majority. All of the Poles were brave and lovers of liberty, but the nobles would brook no interference with their freedom of action as individuals. The rule of the majority was abrogated in all their legislative bodies. A single protesting negative could stop all governmental machinery. Many of the powerful nobles were unwilling to bow to the will of a majority running into the thousands — such yielding was considered base and ignoble. Because of the jealousy of the nobles the king was gradually reduced to the position of a mere figurehead: the national army became a nonentity for the same rea-

son — it was surpassed in numbers by the armed retainers of some of the leading nobility. Excessive individualism on the part of the Polish aristocrats led to selfishness, arrogance, corruption, and various other evils. Few of the privileged classes could see beyond their own petty needs or desires. As a result, Poland became a mere loose confederation of supercilious and self-indulgent nobles, each jealous of the others; each determined to preserve his own independence and prerogatives at all costs. Interest in and a desire for the general good and public welfare had disappeared almost entirely.

While Poland was thus becoming weakened, the nations adjoining her borders were developing along different lines. Both Prussia and Russia were concentrating power in the throne and building up an army sufficient to maintain the national dignity. Catherine the Great and Frederick the Great became contemporaries on the thrones of Russia and Prussia respectively. These ambitious sovereigns were too shrewd and far-sighted for a nobility blinded and overwhelmed by a sense of its own importance. When the inevitable conflict came, Poland was unprepared to meet her aggressive neighbours. Self-centred Polish nobles invited armed interference from these rulers, just as their forefathers had been doing for a century or more. To such a low level had the idea of individualism led them in the furtherance of their selfish plans. A realization of the real conditions came too late. A new constitution was evolved, but it was soon annulled. The insurrection headed by the brave and fearless Kosciuszko, which was a spontaneous

outburst of national patriotism, simply brought the third partition, which left the last king without a kingdom, and all the Poles became subjects of other and alien powers. The attempt to maintain absolute freedom of action to the individual, and the failure to recognize the rights of society as a whole, resulted in a denationalization of Polish sovereignty and the imposition of humiliating conditions upon noble and peasant alike. This, in brief, is the lesson that a study of Poland can teach the Anglo-Saxon of to-day.

It is almost a hundred years since the Congress of Vienna settled the final fate of Poland, after the meteoric career of Napoleon had ended. The Grand Duchy established by him in return for the loyal services rendered by the famous Polish Legions was again parcelled out, and the inhabitants became technically Russians, Prussians and Austrians. But a century of such conditions has not lessened the patriotism of the Poles—the patriotic fires burn as brightly as ever within every Polish breast. Such loyalty to birth and tradition cannot do otherwise than excite the sympathy of a liberty-loving people. It must be remembered that only a small minority of the people were responsible for the conditions that led to anarchy, and then disruption.

Poles are seeking our shores in great numbers, and it is well to know who they are, and why they come. Their blood will enter into the composite American type that will eventually be evolved. Is it good blood, or is it bad blood? A study of the history of Poland and the conditions still existing in the land of their birth furnishes the best answer.

Preface

With the hope and in the belief that this volume answers in a measure at least these questions, this work, the result of extensive travel and considerable study, is given to the public.

NEVIN O. WINTER.

TOLEDO, OHIO, August 20, 1913.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	V
CHAPTER I	
THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE	
Division of Poland — Rivalry of Poland and Russia — The Slavs — Individualism — Classes — Government — The <i>liberum veto</i> — Utopia realized — Arrogance of Nobility — Decadence — Religion — Polish hopes	1
CHAPTER II	
THE BEGINNING OF POLISH NATIONALITY	
The early chroniclers — Piast family — Mieczyslaw I — Con- version to Christianity — Boleslaw I — St. Adalbert — Czechs and Prussians — Mieczyslaw II — Casimir I — Boleslaw II — The martyr bishop — Boleslaw III — Loss of Silesia — Casimir the Just — Teutonic Knights — Casimir the Great — Louis of Hungary — Jadwiga	22
CHAPTER III	
LITHUANIA AND THE JAGIELLOS	
The Lithuanians — A pagan stronghold — Mindvog — Gedimin — Livonian Knights — Vilna — Olgerd — Jagiello — Union with Poland — Conversion of Lithuanians — Cracow be- comes capital — Wladislas III — Casimir IV — Prussians be- come vassals — John Albert — Alexander — Sigismund I — Sigismund Augustus	37
CHAPTER IV	
THE EARLY ELECTED KINGS	
The <i>Pacta Conventa</i> — Election of Henry — His flight — Stephen Batory — His marriage to Anne — The Cossacks — The Jesuits — Sigismund III — Poles capture Moscow — Wladis- las IV — The Uniates — John Casimir — Rebellion of Cos- sacks — Zbaraz — War with Sweden — Casimir abdicates . . .	48

CHAPTER V

JOHN SOBIESKI

- Michael Korybut — Election of Sobieski — Turkish Invasion of Austria — Sobieski's great victory at Vienna — His political troubles — His marital troubles — Loss of Kiev and Smolensk — His death 67

CHAPTER VI

THE BEGINNING OF DECADENCE

- The Electors of Saxony — Augustus II takes the Polish throne — Peter the Great and Charles XII — Stanislaus Leszczyński — Religious intolerance — Russia becomes dominant — Augustus III — The Saxon rule unfortunate 80

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST PARTITION

- Catherine the Great — Frederick the Great — Maria Theresa — The conspiracy and the conspirators — The division of the spoils — The Czartoryski — Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski — His liaison with Catherine — His election — Troubles begin early — Confederation of Bar — Abduction of Stanislaus — Pulaski 92

CHAPTER VIII

THE SECOND PARTITION

- Abandon of capital — Polish women — Russian influence — Insults to Stanislaus — Period of progress — The rebellious triumvirate — Four Years' Diet — Blindness to real conditions — New constitution — Prussian influence — Felix Potocki — Russia declares war — Joseph Poniatowski — The Dumb Diet 112

CHAPTER IX

KOSCIUSZKO: AN INTERNATIONAL HERO

- Youth of Kosciuszko — Disappointment in love — Enlists under Washington — Returns to Poland — Declared dictator — His oath — Raclawice — Defeated by Suvarov — Third Partition — Death of Stanislaus — Kosciuszko revisits America — His will — Correspondence with Alexander I — Death . . . 131

CHAPTER X

AFTER THE DISMEMBERMENT

- The Polish Legions — Dombrowski — Napoleon — Grand Duchy of Warsaw — Moscow disaster — Death of Joseph Poniatowski — The fourth partition — The Kingdom of Poland — Revolution of 1830 — Free city of Cracow — Trouble in Galicia — Uprising of 1863 149

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPITAL OF POLAND'S GLORY

Journey from Vienna — A republic — An old city — University of Cracow — Wawel — Many churches — Cathedral and royal tombs — Jagiello Library — The Planté — The Rynek — The Sukiennice — Market — Municipal custom — The Kazimierz — Jews	166
---	-----

CHAPTER XII

THE CAPITAL OF POLAND'S DECAY

Founding of city — Geographical centre of Europe — Vistula River — Russian soldiers — Zamek — Stare Miasto — Ghetto — Photographing — A progressive city — Lazienki Park — Praga — Courts — Cafés — Willanow	182
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII

GERMANY AND HER POLISH SUBJECTS

Routes — Thorn — Agricultural prosperity — Gnesen — Posen — Imperial Palace — Rathaus — The Reichstag — Polish paintings — Dislike of Slav — Suppression of language — Bismarck — Pan-Germanism — Colonization Commission — Petty regulations	199
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV

AUSTRIA AND HER POLISH SUBJECTS

Galicia — Ruthenians — Austria-Hungary — Mixture of races — Many religions — Pan-Slavism — Agricultural poverty — Wieliczka — An underground city of salt — Polish freedom — Lemberg — Passports	212
--	-----

CHAPTER XV

RUSSIA AND HER POLISH SUBJECTS

Kingdom of Poland — Peasants — Costumes — Irish and Poles — Russification policy — Commercial prosperity — Lodz — Polish retaliation — Strikes — Socialism — Duma — Maria-vites — Border patrol — Smuggling — Passport System — Lithuania — Vilna	223
---	-----

CHAPTER XVI

THE NOBLES

A wedding — Improvidence — Palatines and castellans — The Pans — A noble's retinue — Wealth — Elaborate entertainments — Retainers and courtiers — Sports — Banquets — Drinking — Barbaric display — Genealogies — Patriarchal government — Hospitality — Women	244
---	-----

CHAPTER XVII

THE PEASANT AND HIS RELIGION

Ignorance — Tillers of the soil — Lot of women — Villages — Holidays — Tatra — The "Goorals" — Importance of religion — Shrines — Priests — Churches — Pilgrimages — Czen- tochowa — Mendicants	265
--	-----

CHAPTER XVIII

THE POLISH JEW

Earlocks — Early migrations — Special privileges — The Golden Age — The Kahal — The proletariat — Repulsive villages — Ghetto — Women — Marriage broker — The Pale — Perse- cutions — The <i>halat</i> — The Bund — Talmudists — Rabbis — Narrow religious outlook	280
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX

LITERATURE AND ART

Early legends — Reformation — Latin poets — First printing press — Peter Skarga — Copernicus — Effect of partitionings — Niemcewicz — Mickiewicz — Slowacki — Krasinski — "Pan Tadeusz" — Lelewel — Sienkiewicz — The "Tril- ogy" — Newspapers — Painters — Chopin — Paderewski — Madam Modjeska	302
---	-----

CHAPTER XX

THE POLES IN AMERICA

Early immigrants — Millions of American Poles — Chief centres — Agriculturists — Spirit of independence — Education — Frugality — Americanization — Idealism — Eminent Ameri- can Poles — Polish press — Fraternal organizations — Edu- cational institutions — The duty of Americans	323
APPENDICES	337
INDEX	345

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
JOHN SOBIESKI (<i>see page 67</i>)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
TOMB OF MIECZYSLAW I AND BOLESLAW I, POSEN	27
TOMB OF CASIMIR III, THE GREAT, CRACOW	35
SIGISMUND II AUGUSTUS	46
HENRY, DUKE OF ANJOU (AFTERWARDS HENRY III, KING OF FRANCE)	50
STEPHEN BATORY	54
PETER THE GREAT	82
STANISLAUS LESZCZYNSKI	84
MARIA OF POLAND, WIFE OF LOUIS XV, KING OF FRANCE	88
AUGUSTUS III	90
MAP OF POLAND	92
FREDERICK THE GREAT	94
MARIA THERESA	99
STANISLAUS II	106
CATHERINE THE GREAT	122
PRINCE JOSEPH PONIATOWSKI	124
ANDREW THADDEUS BONAVENTURA KOSCIUSZKO	132
THE KOSCIUSZKO MOUND, NEAR CRACOW	148
ALEXANDER I	158
CHLOPICKI	160
THE WAWEL, CRACOW	170
THE OLD FLORIAN GATE, CRACOW	175
THE SUKIENNICE, CRACOW	176
THE MARKET PLACE, CRACOW	178
A CRACOW JEW	180
A RUSSIAN LIEUTENANT OF POLICE	184
GENERAL VIEW OF WARSAW FROM PRAGA	186
STATUE OF COPERNICUS, WARSAW	188
THE STARE MIASTO, WARSAW	190
THE PALACE OF WILLANOW	196
RIVER SCENE, POSEN	202
AN ANCIENT HOUSE, POSEN	204

	PAGE
THE RATHAUS, POSEN	206
RUTHENIAN PEASANT GIRLS, AND THEIR FOREMAN, GALICIA .	212
A POLISH COTTAGE, GALICIA	218
THE THEATRE, LEMBERG	220
POLISH GIRLS AT WORK IN THE FIELD	224
A PEASANT WOMAN, RUSSIAN POLAND	226
RUSSIAN SOLDIERS	237
THE HOLY GATEWAY, VILNA	241
A POLISH NOBLE'S HOME	260
POLISH WOMEN CARRYING MORTAR, CRACOW	268
POLISH BRIDE AND GROOM	270
A TYPICAL POLISH JEW	280
SCENE IN THE JEWISH QUARTER, WARSAW	289
NIKOLAUS COPERNICUS	306
STATUE OF ADAM MICKIEWICZ, POSEN	309
HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ	316
FREDERIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN	320

POLAND OF TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

CHAPTER I

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Division of Poland — Rivalry of Poland and Russia — The Slavs — Individualism — Classes — Government — The *liberum veto* — Utopia realized — Arrogance of Nobility — Decadence — Religion — Polish hopes.

Poor Poland!

Many are they who have uttered that exclamation as they have read the history of this unfortunate nation. The disappearance from the family of nations of a country which had existed for eight hundred years is so unusual that it is not easily understood. A feeling of sympathy occurs to many as they travel over those parts of Russia, Germany and Austria which were formerly a part of Poland. One writer has characterized Poland as the knight among nations, and the term is not illy applied. Many of its acts were as erratic and irresponsible as those of any knight-errant of history.

“He is only a Pole,” says some Anglo-Saxon, when he sees a rather short, stocky man working

with a pick or shovel on the streets of one of our great cities. And yet this same Anglo-Saxon probably prides himself on his birth because of the achievements of some of his English-speaking ancestors. He may be willing to concede the element of greatness to a few Germans, French and Italians, but he speaks of the Slav as though the latter were in some way an inferior.

“What have the Poles ever done?” some one, who is acquainted only with the members of that nationality who toil with their hands, may ask.

It was a Pole, Nikolaus Copernicus, who first taught that the sun was the centre of the solar system, and thus founded modern astronomy. It was John Sobieski, another Pole, who defeated the Turks at Vienna, and by that victory stopped an invasion of the followers of Mohammed which threatened to overrun all Europe. Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a native of Poland, enlisted with the American forces under Washington, and proved one of his most effective helpers. He was given a vote of thanks by Congress after the Revolutionary War was over, and returned to his own troubled country to help fight her battles. John Huss, the forerunner of Luther, and the real herald of the Reformation, although classed as a Bohemian, was a Slav; and the Poles and Bohemians are first cousins. Other Poles in later years have likewise achieved distinction. Helen Modjeska, the eminent tragedian, was

of Polish birth. Henry Sienkiewicz, the author of "Quo Vadis," is of the same nationality, as is Paderewski, the eminent pianist and composer. Many other famous writers and musical composers, both old and modern, have been Polish by birth. The Pole really has something to boast of as well as the Anglo-Saxon.

Russia, Germany and Austria, however, through their grasping and covetous sovereigns, decided to divide Poland among themselves. It was not difficult to find a pretext for war when conscience was stifled. As a result there were three different distributions and partitionings, and then Poland existed in name only. The last distribution of spoils was more than a century ago. The very name of Poland disappeared in 1846, when the little republic, with its capital at Cracow, was absorbed bodily by Austria, with the consent of the Powers of Europe.

Of the three countries that participated in the disintegration of Poland, Austria treats her Polish subjects the best. They are allowed practical autonomy in their government, and are subjected to no persecution whatever. Germany is using every effort to denationalize her Poles, and abolish the language. She is at work just as hard as can be to crush out the national spirit. But if they cannot study their language in the schools, the Poles study it and are taught it secretly by the priests in their homes. The language has become almost a fetish to

the Pole. To maintain it as a living tongue, and leave it as a heritage to his children, he will suffer and sacrifice much.

Russia might have stood best with the Poles at large had she been wise, because both races are Slavs. "Might have been" and "being," however, are two entirely different terms, and it would be a difficult matter to find a Pole who would say a good word for the czar. The Poles, in many respects, stand out superior in culture, energy and civilization to the Russians proper. And Russia possesses the real marrow of old Poland.

Poland was already a European power, with institutions more or less similar to those of Western Europe, while Russia was still largely Asiatic in character. It was a racial antagonism that arose between the two peoples which never ended until one succumbed. As Pushkin, the great Slav poet, says:

"Already long ago amongst ourselves
These races twain have carried on a war;
And more than once, first we, then they again,
Beneath the alien terror have succumbed."

In the early part of the seventeenth century Poland had the upper hand. The very heart of Russia acknowledged her rule. The King of Poland had been asked to send his son to rule over Moscow. He responded to the invitation, and the sacred Kremlin was occupied by Poles. But Sigismund asked too

much; he refused to surrender the Catholic faith. Demanding too much, he lost all. When the opportunity came, the Poles were as overbearing and unyielding as the Russians proved to be later when the tide had turned. A spirit was developed among the Muscovites by their adversity which cemented their patriotism. A prince and a butcher led the Russian nationalists, and the Poles were expelled. It is an interesting matter for speculation, whether, had the Poles succeeded in retaining the upper hand, the Russians would have sent weeping patriots to the courts of Europe. Such a result would doubtless have followed, for there would have been a denationalizing of Muscovy.

Polish nationality had its beginning in what is now Eastern Germany. The name implies the "dwellers of the plains." We do not know much about the authentic history of Poland until one of her kings, Mieczyslaw, became a Roman Catholic in order to marry a Bohemian princess, which gave the Latin stamp to her civilization. This king then received Bohemia as her dowry. Boleslaw the Brave followed, and with his victorious armies extended his kingdom to the Baltic Sea. Boleslaw II killed a bishop in a fit of anger, but, being pursued by the avenging arm of the Church, died in exile. Several kings followed who loved the cup too much to hold the sceptre straight. At last Jadwiga, or Hedwiga, married Jagiello, afterwards known as Wladislas II,

under the advice of her counsellors, in order to gain the territory of Lithuania. The proudest days of Polish history are connected with this house of Jagiello. Then follow successively Sigismund I, John Casimir, Stephen Batory, John Sobieski, and other great fighters. Name after name occurs of kings who are practically forgotten by all save the Poles themselves.

At one time Poland was the greatest power in Central Europe, and was the chief representative of the Slavonic race. The Slavs are divided into many branches, among which are the Russians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Poles, Czechs, and Wends. The Russians are subdivided into the Great Russians, Little (Malo) Russians and White Russians. The Poles resemble the Czechs more than any of the other Slavonic branches, although the latter are more sober and less volatile than the former. The Poles themselves were distinguished by dialectical differences. The original Slav tongue is unknown, although the Bulgars claim to be the oldest of the Slavs. The dialects differ widely to-day. All are highly inflected, having terminations to mark the seven cases and the genders, but there is no article. The Russians and Bulgarians use the Cyrillian alphabet, which is partly copied from the Greek, but the Poles use the Latin. They employ a number of diacritical marks, however, which give the letters different sounds, so that their alphabet

is really more extensive than the English. The Polish language has doubtless wandered farther from the original Slavonic than the Russian, for it has been more under foreign influence. Many German words will be found in it. The Jesuits introduced many Latin words with Polish terminations, and many French words were likewise taken over. In fact, the language has probably continued in greater purity since the dismemberment than before, for the Poles have found the native tongue the greatest bond of union.

An extremeness in temperament is a characteristic of the Slav. It can be traced in the Russian as well as in the Pole. In the midst of the most autocratic government in the world, we find the most democratic institution—the village commune. A people naturally good-natured and charitable in their views are guilty of the most cruel punishments on the part of the government, and of almost inhuman reprisals on the part of subjects. So it is and always has been with the Poles. They were and still are idealists. Poland was called a republic — *Rzeczpospolita* — in reality, it was an elective monarchy. And yet it was a sort of constitutional monarchy long before the other nations of Europe bothered themselves about constitutions.

Individualism was the death of Poland. “It was,” says Mr. Brandes, “an enthusiastic and unpractical people, noble-minded and untrustworthy,

pomp-loving and volatile, vivacious and thoughtless, a people who despised severe and fatiguing labour, and loved all intense and delicate, sensuous and intellectual enjoyments, but, above all, who worshipped independence to the point of insanity, freedom to the extent of the *liberum veto*, and who, when they had lost independence and freedom, remained faithful to their old love."

Poland is the only example afforded by history of a nation deliberately committing self-destruction for the sake of absolute individual liberty. But it was a liberty only of the landowners, some thousands of selfish country gentlemen who refused to pay any taxes. There were originally two classes of peasants, the free and the bound, but all had been gradually reduced to the condition of serfs. They were finally forbidden to possess property in land. In no other country has the entire destiny of the state been so absolutely dependent upon the character, disposition and habits of the nobles.

The inhabitants of Poland were really divided into five classes: the nobles, the clergy, the burghers, the peasants, and the Jews. The aristocrats themselves practically divided the people into only two classes, the nobles and the ignobles. From the earliest days, however, the clergy occupied an important position in Poland. The Church owned immense estates, and the bishops had seats in the Senate. They were usually appointed by the king

and confirmed by the Pope. The burghers included the tradesmen and artisans, and they were, for the most part, composed of Germans and Jews, and, in some places, Armenians. The burghers were generally governed by special laws. As most of the smaller towns were the property of the nobles, the burghers were practically subjects of the landlord. Nevertheless, some of them became very rich, and had considerable influence in an indirect way. The nobles were exclusively in possession of civil and political rights. These were lost, however, if they engaged in trade. Peasants and burghers were thus absolutely at the mercy of the nobles.

The Senate of Poland consisted of two archbishops, fifteen bishops, thirty-three palatines and eighty-five castellans, a total of one hundred and thirty-five senators. When the Diet was not in session the Senate could give temporary decisions which had the force of laws until the Diet met. The Archbishop of Gnesen stood at the head of the Senate. He ranked next to the king, and actually filled that place during the interregnums. Hence he was called the *inter rex*, and received almost royal honours. The king received him standing, and he had the right of remonstrating with the king on all matters of government. The king had ten ministers, each of whom had a seat in the Senate but took no part in the discussions. The Senate took from the king the right of making peace and war.

Petty diets were held in each palatinate six weeks before the general Diet, at which deputies to the latter were chosen. Questions were also brought forward and prepared which were to be presented to the general assembly of the nation. The usual form of address among the nobles on these occasions was "brother," for, with a few exceptions, there were no outward marks of distinction. Titles and royal decorations were not introduced until the nation's decadence under the Saxon kings. Every third Diet had to meet in Grodno, a concession originally made to the Lithuanians. It was held two days after Michaelmas every other year, and was supposed to last no more than six weeks. Under no circumstances could the time be extended or shortened, and all deliberations had to take place by daylight. The election assembly was held at Warsaw. Poland maintained no ambassadors at foreign courts. Whenever the throne became vacant the Diet assembled to examine into the administration of the late king and his Senate before a successor was elected. Any law that was not approved could be repealed and new measures passed which became laws by a unanimous vote.

The king gradually became merely a figurehead. Because he was king, he naturally stood higher than any one else, but he owed his position to election by the privileged classes. This dignity brought him no power except that of a few appointments.

This was at a time when other nations were doing just the opposite, curtailing the nobles and strengthening the throne. Any plan suggested by him could be blocked by a member of the Diet rising in his seat and saying "I protest." This immediately dissolved the assembly. Hence bribery and intrigue were the only means of influence that the king himself could employ.

As Poland became decadent, it was an easy matter to corrupt one member who would exercise the right of *liberum veto*. The *liberum veto* originated in the principle that a free man cannot be governed or taxed contrary to his own declared will. Thus it came about that unanimous consent was required for all resolutions dealing with these matters, and the dissent of a single individual was sufficient for the rejection of any measure. Had any noble acknowledged the power of the majority, he would have thought that he was yielding to tyranny. The principle of independence was carried so far that the caprice of the individual outweighed the will of the multitude. A single individual could bring to a standstill the entire machinery of state. On the field of election a single dissent could annul ten, twenty or thirty thousand assents. From 1536 to 1572 the Diet was dissolved seven times, almost one-half of its regular sessions. At a still later period not a single law was passed, or any business done, for a whole generation, during the reign of Augus-

tus III, although the Diet met regularly every two years.

The law of might was frequently enforced. Sometimes when persuasion and threats were alike vain, the fatal *nie pozwalam* (I do not consent) would cause a thousand swords to be unsheathed. The opposition would thus be ended by the death of the opponent or opponents. This method of establishing unanimity sometimes had a salutary effect in the days before the nation's decadence began. In 1764 some considered it a special sign of the advancement of civilization since only thirteen were killed during the assembly of nobles in that year. In order to save himself from popular fury the noble used to hand in his protest in writing, and then wander about cursed by the nation and the object of its aversion. If there was too much opposition to be overcome by force a *rokosz* (confederation) would be formed, bound together by solemn oaths to battle for their opinions. The *liberum veto* was thus suspended by a movement which sometimes had for its only object the carrying out of the *liberum veto* of some influential noble or group of nobles. In a confederation the votes of a majority ruled and, whatever the result of its acts, the members could not be punished or looked upon as rebels. Thus revolutions were legally organized in Poland. These confederations will be mentioned frequently throughout the pages devoted to history.

The national forces were cut down in the latter days of Poland's history, because the Diet would not pay for their support; but each magnate had his own body of retainers, and a few of these armed bands of the nobles were at times more numerous than the national army. Some of them even took up arms against the king, or joined forces with those of other powers in opposing the state. Each noble was resolved to preserve his rights and privileges as a feudal lord. He was determined to be a law unto himself, and the country suffered accordingly.

Utopia had been realized, for any gentleman could do as he pleased so long as he did not tread on the toes of some other gentleman. The army had been virtually abolished and the diplomats dispensed with, because the Polish lords refused to pay for them. Disorder spread. As lawlessness increased, however, legislative productiveness also increased; but none obeyed, and there was no means of enforcement. Blackmail and official venality became open; the courts were a scandal. If men were angels and not human, such a political utopia as Poland in her last years might have been ideal. But no state can exist without an executive authority having sufficient power to control its people and to punish the violators of its laws. In every country there are bad qualities to be curbed, as well as good ones to be encouraged.

Poland had excellent laws on her statutes, but the

word "obedience" had by tacit consent been eliminated. There was an abundance of princes and generals, but no one was willing to play the part of a humble private. The safety of the country rested on the good will of the privileged classes, who numbered probably one-twentieth of the population. The other nineteen-twentieths bore the burdens, but had nothing to say in the government. They were brave and chivalrous, hospitable and fascinating, but lacked restraint and cohesion. They would rather call in foreign forces to accomplish some selfish end than submit to the slightest curb of what was considered a personal privilege. "Poland was at one time," says a writer, "the most cultured and the most illiterate, the richest in patriots and in traitors, in great men and in mean men."

In its last extremities almost the one hundred thousand or one hundred and fifty thousand landed population, pleading their privileges as noblemen, refused to pay anything for the support of the army, but levied a poll-tax on artisans, shepherds, millers, farmers, and the poorest sections of the community in general. They even received their wine and other luxuries free of duty. The country had to be supported, so that what the nobles escaped in taxes was paid by the poor peasants. It is no wonder that all the descriptions of Poland, handed down to us by early writers, dwell upon the extreme poverty of the

common people and the lack of development of the country. "The natives," says a writer of the seventeenth century, "were poorer, humbler, and more miserable than any people we had yet observed in our travels; wherever we stopped they flocked around us in crowds, and, asking for charity, used the most abject gestures." "The only houses of entertainment," says an earlier writer, "are places built of wood, where travellers are lodged with the horses, cows, and hogs, in a long stable made of boards, ill-joined, and thatched with straw. 'Tis true that there is a chamber at the end of it with a stove, . . . but the inn-keeper lodges in that room with his children and the whole family. Those who have occasion to travel in the summer may avoid part of these inconveniences by lying in a barn on fresh straw."

In the early history of Poland society was organized on a strictly military basis. The generals, who commanded in the fortresses, were called castellans, and that name clung to petty magistrates in later years. As the Polish army, which had formerly been so formidable, dwindled, and the power of the elected monarchs lessened, the discontented factions formed the habit of appealing to other nations for help to restore order. In this they were simply preparing the way for a great national funeral. It was Saxon soldiers that put Augustus II on the throne; Swedish arms gave the crown to Stanislaus

Leszczynski; Russian troops set the last king in his royal place at Warsaw. Bribery, intrigue, violence — all these forces were employed. There was always a disgruntled faction which disputed the acts of the majority. Monarchs are anything but magnanimous as a rule, and they harboured the idea of benefit. At any rate, it did not hurt their consciences so much to interfere when unasked in the affairs of Poland, as if they had never been requested to send their troops on Polish soil. Thus we can see how the Poles brought their troubles upon themselves, even though we cannot see the justice of the partitions. Swedes, Saxons and Russians fought out their battles on the soil of Poland, technically at peace with all these belligerents, and her provisions were ravaged for the support of all these armies. Nobody thought of asking permission or offering compensation afterwards.

It was not until Poland had been robbed of a third of her territories by the first partition that the nobles consented to surrender some of their rights by the famous constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791. The burghers were then admitted to citizenship, and the condition of the peasantry was greatly ameliorated. A standing army was provided for, and the crown was made hereditary. This act, which was the first really national movement in the history of the country, came too late.

At the period of her greatest expansion the king-

dom of Poland extended to the Baltic on the north and reached to the Black Sea on the south, a distance of more than seven hundred miles. From east to west its breadth was nearly as great, for it reached from the heart of Prussia almost to the heart of Muscovy. Its area was about two hundred and eighty-two thousand square miles, or as large as Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Kentucky. It was far more expansive than modern Germany or France. Its population numbered probably twenty millions of people. It was really a vast plain, with hardly any natural frontiers excepting the Baltic Sea on the north and the Carpathian Mountains at the southwest. This lack of natural boundary doubtless accelerated its ruin. Its great artery was the Vistula, which rises in the Carpathians and flows by Cracow, Warsaw, and Thorn, and the main branch finally empties itself into the sea near Dantzic. The basin of this stream formed the real centre of this kingdom. Like the soil, the river is now shared by the three partitioning powers. Our difficulty in names will begin here, also, for in Polish this river is known as the Wisla, and in German it is Weichsel.

Much of the soil is very fertile, but there are also vast barren tracts consisting of sand and swamp, especially in the eastern parts of the country. Poland was almost exclusively an agricultural country. Dantzic (Gdansk) was the greatest commercial cen-

tre, and it had joined the Hanseatic League. After the loss of the Black Sea it was practically the only port of the country. There was no manufacturing, except of the simplest necessities, and little mining except the wonderful mines of rock salt at Wieliczka. Trade was generally in the hands of Jews, Germans and Armenians.

During the invasions of the barbaric hordes of the East, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, Poland played the part of a bulwark. Her plains were devastated by vast armies of these Orientals, and on two occasions they were checked only at the capital city of Cracow itself. Some go so far as to say that Western civilization itself would have succumbed had it not been for the valor of Polish arms. It must be admitted that a great debt is owing to the Poles for their part in the struggles with the East.

The Poles belong to the great Aryan family from which the Anglo-Saxon also claims descent. The number still speaking the Polish language is now estimated at about twenty millions. But many other races were included in ancient Poland. There were White Russians (Lithuanians) and Red Russians, who belonged to the Eastern Slavs, and spoke a very different tongue from the Poles. There were Letts and Livonians; Kashubes, Germans, and Armenians; Esthonians and the Jews, of whom there were several millions. In Austrian Poland the Jews are

very conspicuous by reason of the long curls which they wear in front of their ears. In Russia this distinguishing mark is forbidden. They had come into Poland as early as the eleventh century, and were of considerable influence on the country. In the thirteenth century they had been granted certain special privileges by Boleslaw the Pious, and this brought in another stream of Jewish immigrants. Among these privileges was one that the corpses of Jews could be removed free of duty, and another that a Christian should pay a fine of two stones of pepper to the province as a punishment for desecrating a synagogue. If a Jew called for help in the night by reason of ill treatment the Christian must come to his aid on pain of punishment. Later, when the wealthier Jews began to even surpass Polish nobles in the splendour of their attire, we find an edict forbidding them to wear gold chains, signet rings, and swords inlaid with jewels.

Religious toleration had at one time characterized Poland, and it was during this period that the Jews came. Calvinists, Lutherans, Greeks and Moham-medans lived peacefully in their midst side by side. The kings swore an oath that they would tolerate all sects. When Henry of Valois tried to avoid this oath the marshal bluntly informed him, "If you will not take the oath, you will not rule." The non-Catholic element was further increased by conquest and the immigration of other races. But from the

period of the introduction of the aggressive order of the Jesuits, this tolerance gradually disappeared. The flames of religious discord were fanned into life by them. Heretofore each party had good-naturedly applied the term "dissidents" to the other, but now the term began to designate only those dissenting from the established church. On more than one occasion the Lutherans appealed to Prussia, Sweden and even Great Britain, while the Orthodox generally importuned Russia. It was a very unfortunate fact that the Poles were not far-sighted enough to continue their tolerance; or that the church dignitaries themselves were so narrow as to encourage this fanaticism. But religious devotion has ever characterized the Poles, and the Polish churches of to-day never lack for worshippers; the shrines are never deserted.

The Poles have never forgotten the old kingdom. They never cease to sigh for their lost independence. The bleeding heart is very much in evidence throughout all of old Poland — too much, perhaps, for their own good. They cling to everything that can recall the Poland of the past. Their artists and poets have all assisted in keeping the old spirit alive, and have made national incidents the inspiration for their works. There is a prevailing air of melancholy in Posen, in Cracow, and in Warsaw. Russia has striven to build a wall so high about old Poland that no bird can fly over it, and so dense that not even the

breeze can pass through it. One cannot help but sympathize with a people, who, with an intense love of their native country, find upon the soil of their ancestors a cruel master who aims to crush out one of the noblest of human virtues, that of love of country. Poland has become a symbol for freedom. Everywhere in Europe that there has been any fighting for freedom, Poles have taken a part in it. They may have been mistaken in their views, but they believed they were fighting for freedom. The conquerors have not succeeded in crushing this spirit.

If Poland is dead as a political entity, it is very much alive in every other way. The ancient fire still burns in her poets and authors, and the book-stalls are crowded with their productions. This life manifests itself in her arts and crafts, which astonish the beholder by their artistic merit. The Church enthusiastically works to build up and preserve this spirit, for to the Poles religion and nationality are inseparably intertwined. The hope of independence at some time in the future is as strong in the Polish breast as that of another Zion among the scattered Israelites.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF POLISH NATIONALITY

The early chroniclers — Piast family — Mieczyslaw I — Conversion to Christianity — Boleslaw I — St. Adalbert — Czechs and Prussians — Mieczyslaw II — Casimir I — Boleslaw II — The martyr bishop — Boleslaw III — Loss of Silesia — Casimir the Just — Teutonic Knights — Casimir the Great — Louis of Hungary — Jadwiga.

POLISH nationality seems to have had its inception in the province of Posen, or Poznan, as it is spelled in Polish. There are writings extant, credited to the sixth and seventh centuries, which speak of Slavs dwelling along the Vistula, but their designation is indefinite. As is the case with most of these Slavic races, the early history is shrouded in tradition and legend. The Polish chroniclers, who were ecclesiastics and wrote in the Latin tongue, pretend to trace the descent of the Poles from Lech, a great-grandson of Noah. The legends have the same fanciful character as those relating to other European races written about the same time or earlier. Many of the quaint traditions likewise have a miraculous character, but are treated as genuine history. The monks first introduced the art of writing in the country, and intermingled their mysticism with the actual historical facts.

According to the best accounts the Piast family came to the throne of the " Polaki " about 830 A. D., and this family ruled for five centuries, or until the union with Lithuania. The government was arbitrary, being based on a military despotism. The people were purely agricultural and lived in village communities. The first Piast made Gniesno, or Gnesen, the seat of government. The name signifies a nest, and was so named because an eagle's nest was found there. For the same reason, it is said, the eagle became the national crest.

In the year 963 a heathen prince, one of the Piasts, Mieczyslaw, was on the throne, and was defeated by a German baron subject to the Prussian emperor, Otho I. The name of this king is sometimes spelled Mieszko. This man is said to have been born blind, but without any assignable cause his eyesight returned. The religion of the Poles had hitherto been a form of gross idolatry. A year after coming to the throne,—in 965,—this heathen prince became a convert of Christianity. It was not a miracle, or the influence of the priest, so we are told, that caused this change of heart in Mieczyslaw, but it was love which first occasioned the transition. He became enamoured of Dombrowska, the daughter of the Duke of Bohemia, a country which had lately embraced Christianity. This lady refused to accept his suit unless he was baptized, and so the Polish prince sacrificed the superstitions and preju-

dices of his ancestors on the altar of love. Secular purposes probably were not overlooked, as by this alliance he consolidated the power of the two Slavic principalities, Bohemia and Poland, against the threatening encroachments of the Germans. It is here that the wide divergence begins between Poland and Russia, converted to Christianity about the same time. Poland received the Roman faith, which allied her to the Western nations of Europe, while Russia adopted the Eastern Church and became Byzantine.

Mieczyslaw was quite successful in converting his subjects to the new religion, both by precept and the sword, and through the assistance of St. Adalbert (Swienty Wajciach, in Polish), who was Bishop of Prague at that time. Mieczyslaw broke down with his own hands the idols of his country. As an example of the excessive ardour with which the Polish prince advocated his new doctrine, we are told that whenever the gospel was read the hearers were obliged to half-draw their swords in order to testify their readiness to defend the truth of the gospel. The first formal edict preserved is an order that a Christian hymn should be sung before engaging in battle. Shortly after his conversion this prince founded a bishopric at Posen, and another at Gnesen, both of which bishoprics exist even to this day.

When Mieczyslaw died in 992, he was succeeded

by his son Boleslaw (or Boleslas), who reigned for more than thirty years. Up to this time Poland was a mere duchy, tributary to Germany, but under this ruler it was raised to a kingdom, and Boleslaw assumed the title of king. The German emperor of that period, Otho III, himself placed the diadem upon the brow of Boleslaw, after he had been royally entertained by that prince, and declared that the honours of a king should be given to him and his posterity as rulers of Poland. This was later ratified by the Pope, who at that time was considered the official dispenser of crowns and diadems.

St. Adalbert is said to have preached the Christian religion first to the Poles under a large tree which stood on a part of the present market square in Cracow, where a chapel now stands in his honour. The Czechs soon rejected the new gospel, as they were not entirely alienated from the old paganism, and the missionary's code of morals was too severe for them. Especially did they resent his reproof of polygamy. St. Adalbert was in reality driven out of Prague, their capital. His later years were spent among the Poles and Prussians. He was practically the first Christian apostle among the Prussians. They, too, were not easily won over from their heathen deities, and Adalbert was killed by a pagan priest near Dantzic in 997. Hence this man, who had introduced Christianity among the Poles, lost his life while doing missionary work among the

Prussians, thus becoming a martyr. Upon his death Boleslaw purchased his body at a great price — legend says they demanded its weight in gold — burying it at Gnesen, where it is still preserved, and makes a very holy place for Poles to visit. The events of his life are figured on the brazen gates of the cathedral in that city.

Boleslaw I, who is surnamed both the Brave and the Great, was an ambitious and able ruler, and extended the confines of Poland to a considerable extent. The reign of Boleslaw was filled with wars, of which the first was against the Bohemians, and he even captured their capital of Prague. After the death of Otho, war was waged with the Prussians. The greatest war of this reign, however, was that against Yaroslav, Prince of Kiev. That prince had expelled his nephew, Sviatopolk, and Boleslaw took up the cause of the latter. He was victorious in a decisive battle which took place on the banks of the Bug in 1016. Poland afterwards suffered for this, however, for Yaroslav established himself in the end. His reign was one of great progress for the nation, as many new cities were built and trade was increased by the influx of foreign merchants. The Benedictine monks were invited into the country from France, and several monasteries were founded by that order. He created an independent Polish church by establishing the archbishopric of Gnesen, to which the other bishoprics were made subserv-



TOMB OF MIECZYSŁAW I AND BOLESŁAW I, POSEN.



ient. In 1025, at the age of fifty-eight, Boleslaw died and was buried at Posen. A striking monument in the cathedral of that city, with lifelike statues of the two men, marks the resting-place of himself and his father, who are known in Polish history as the first two Christian kings.

After Boleslaw had been laid in the tomb of his fathers, he was succeeded by his son Mieczyslaw II. During this reign the kingdom enjoyed nine years of luxury intermingled with debauchery. The country degenerated from its former position; the people receded into paganism, from which they had probably not advanced very far as yet. Mieczyslaw was a man of little force, from the scant record left of him, and the only thing of significance in his reign was the division of Poland into subdivisions called palatinates. He died in 1034.

Following Mieczyslaw comes his son, the first Casimir (in Polish this name is spelled Kazimierz). This king was very young when he succeeded to the throne, and his mother, Rixa, a German woman, acted as regent. So unpopular did she become that both she and her son were compelled to flee the country. During this vacancy of the throne practical anarchy arose, as the peasants, irritated by their condition of practical slavery, seized arms against their masters and even desecrated the holy churches. It was to some extent a reaction of the pagan element. The only thing that saved the country from

complete destruction was an invasion by the Bohemians, which seemed to unite the people with a sense of patriotism. The serfs bowed their necks to the yoke anew; again began their worship in the churches; and Casimir once more resumed the sceptre.

It is said that during his wanderings Casimir had become a monk in France. When he found that the people wanted him again as king, the Pope refused his consent until the Poles agreed to pay the Peter's pence, and that the whole nation should shave their heads. This is only legendary, and is given as an explanation of the custom of shaving the head which was universal among Polish nobles. The heads of the sons were shaved at the age of manhood, which was a sign of their adoption as sons and heirs. Upon his return Casimir soon brought about peace. A marriage with the sister of Yaroslav, Prince of Kiev, gave additional prestige to the new sovereign, for this Russian prince was at that time a powerful potentate. After a reign of sixteen years Casimir passed away in the year 1058, and was buried with his ancestors at Posen.

The eldest of four sons of Casimir succeeded him with the title of Boleslaw II. This king was ready to fight the battles of others, as well as his own. He stretched out a helping hand to every weak sovereign, even when it meant peril to himself. He fought the battles of the monarchs of Hungary and

Russia, and even other countries. At one time he conquered the city of Kiev, a very important city at that time, filled with semi-Oriental life. So impressed was he with the voluptuous life led there that he and his nobles remained for some time, basking themselves in this existence.

During this time of absence from his kingdom troubles arose at home which called back Boleslaw and his followers. So cruel was Boleslaw in punishing the refractory serfs that he was rebuked by Stanislaus, the Bishop of Cracow. The latter even threatened him with the vengeance of the Church unless he ceased from the cruel slaughters. The king fell into a terrible rage, and with his own hands murdered the poor bishop at the very altar. As a punishment Boleslaw was accursed, excommunicated, dethroned, and banished by Pope Gregory VII. Abandoned by men, and denounced as one abhorred by God himself, the poor monarch crept away into the forests, and no one, not even the kings whom he had befriended, would furnish him an asylum. This man, who had for years wielded a sceptre and revelled in luxury, spent the last months of his life, so we are told, in doing menial work for the monks in a monastery. Death ended his six years' exile in 1082. So far as is known he made no effort to regain his lost crown.

The vengeance of the Pope did not cease with Boleslaw, but for two centuries the ruling dukes of

Poland were not allowed to assume the regal title; and his direct descendants were excluded from the throne. A brother of Boleslaw, by name Wladislas, or Ladislas, became the reigning duke. His first act was to send an embassy to Rome, in order to placate the Pope. As a result, the churches were again allowed to be opened.

Wladislas was succeeded by his son, Boleslaw III (1103-1139). This latter king is surnamed by the Poles the wry-mouthed, because his mouth was somewhat out of shape as a result of a wound he had received. As a matter of fact, many of the Polish kings have received some sort of distinguishing nickname. This king was likewise a successful warrior, and he took part in a number of wars with neighbouring princes. Many thousands received Christian baptism. The King of Prussia tried to impose a tribute upon the Poles, but a battle followed in which the Germans were routed. Peace was finally cemented by the marriage of the Polish duke with a sister of the reigning Prussian sovereign. At length, worn out by his strenuous campaigns, and with his spirit broken by a defeat which he suffered, the king passed out of life in 1139.

Following an unwise custom, which caused so much trouble in the early history of Russia, Boleslaw divided his dominions among his four oldest sons. As a result conflicts arose among these sons, but the entire inheritance finally devolved upon the

youngest son, Casimir, after the brief reign of Wladislas II, and Boleslaw IV, and Mieczyslas III, with the exception of Silesia, which was retained by his eldest brother, Wladislas. From this time this important province of Silesia is alienated from the Polish possessions, which was an unfortunate thing for the growing nation. Although the most of Silesia is now Germanized, yet the Polish language will be found prevalent in many districts. When these monarchs had nothing else to do they endeavoured to Christianize that section of modern Russia known as the Baltic Provinces. These people were sunk into the grossest idolatry and ignorance, and Boleslaw attempted to spread the new religion with the sword. The effect lasted so long as the sword hung over their heads, and no longer. Some of the young Polish nobles caught the infection of the crusades, and a numerous army of Polish volunteers embarked in that cause.

Casimir II, who came to the throne in 1178, is known as the Just. This man seems to have been a very amiable character, and, although a valiant warrior, he rendered himself more conspicuous by his mildness and benevolence in peace. He was indeed a father to his people. Although it was impossible for him, under the Polish law, to free the serfs, yet he did everything within his power to alleviate their condition. Under him the nucleus of a senate was introduced. He has left behind him the

character of the most amiable monarch which ever sat upon the Polish throne. He died in 1194.

Some of the intervening reigns between these leading sovereigns have nothing especial to record, although a great Mongolian invasion occurred during this period. They carried off many prisoners with them. Among these rulers are Leszek the White, Boleslaw the Modest, and Leszek the Black. The regal title was again restored in the year 1296. We find another Wladislas, who is known as the Short, upon the throne in the early part of the fourteenth century. This man waged successful warfare against the Teutonic Knights. This order originally had been founded on religious principles, and had been chartered by the Pope. The members wore a black coat, over which was a white cloak with a black cross. Their weapon was a sword, and they took vows of almost monkish austerity. A Knight must be of Teutonic blood, and he vowed to live a life of chastity. From them as a nucleus grew up the Prussian nation. As the years passed the Teutonic Knights became arrogant, and they attempted to exercise sovereign authority over territories claimed by the Poles. Originally approved by Rome, they had later been denounced by the Pope as out of the pale and protection of his authority.

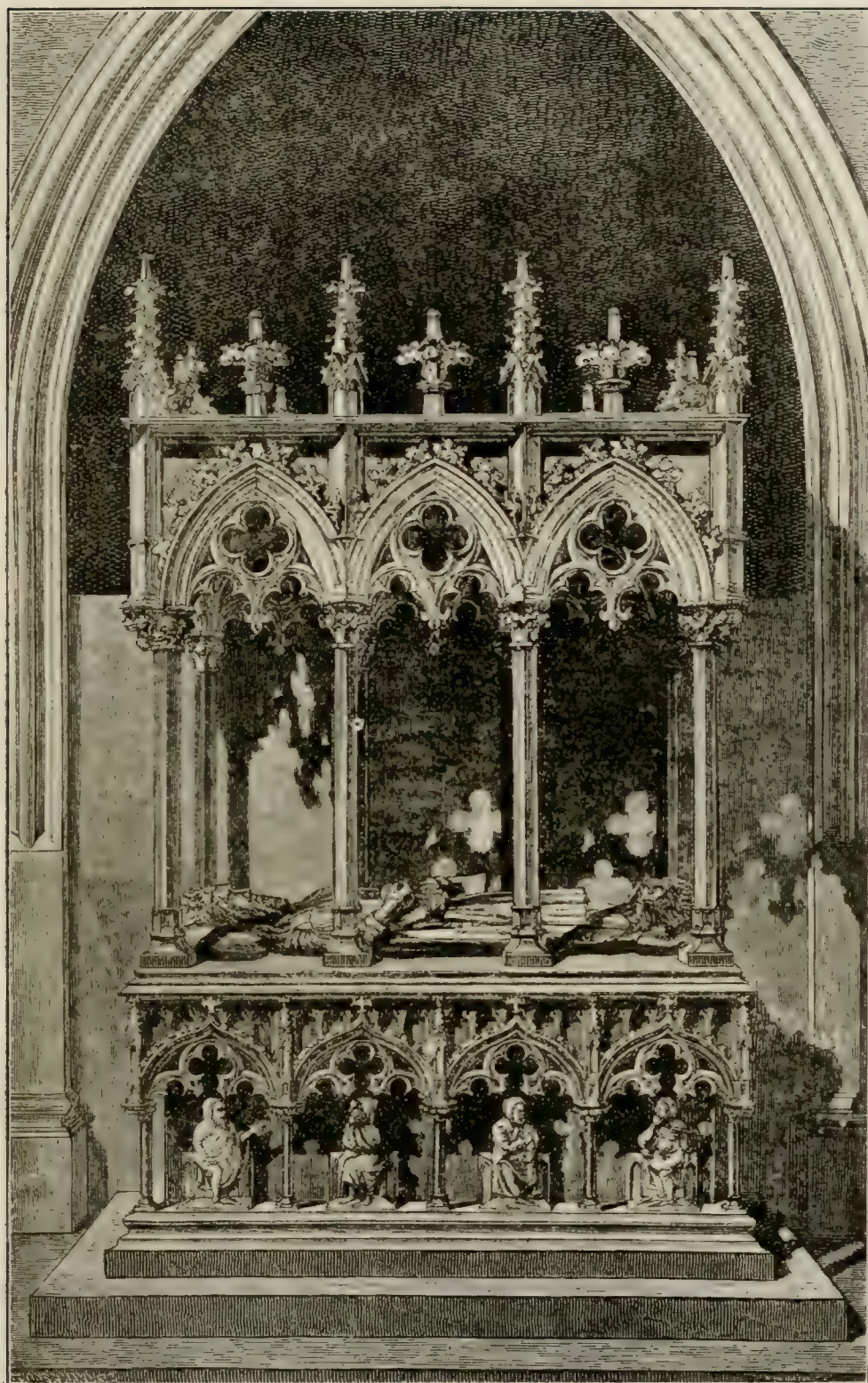
Having successfully carried out his warfare with the Teutonic Knights, Wladislas was crowned with great pomp in the cathedral at Cracow. He was the

first monarch to be crowned there, and was also the first to be laid at rest in the Wawel. From this time Cracow became prominent in Polish history, and around it the national life begins to centre. The entire province of Galicia is soon after united to the kingdom by the extinction of its line of reigning dukes. Wladislas is said to have given the following advice to his son on his death-bed: "If you have any regard for your honour or your reputation, take care to yield nothing to the Knights of the Teutonic Order and the Marquis of Brandenburg." These words proved to be really prophetic, for it was after this House of Brandenburg came to the throne of Prussia that the partitioning of Poland began.

We now come to another noteworthy reign, that of Casimir III, who is known as the Great, and ruled from 1333 to 1370. He proved to be the Polish Justinian, for it was during his reign that the laws of Poland were first reduced to a consistent form. Heretofore the noble was supreme judge over his domains, and, though an appeal lay to the king, this was greatly a matter of form. The sovereign did not dare overrule a noble, because the nobles were too powerful. All of the statutes, which were formed into a code in 1368, are written in the Latin language. This was really a great advance for that age. It established at least a reasonable security for life and property. Regular courts were appointed in each palatinate, with fixed fees for the

judges. It may be said in passing that Latin was the official language of Poland, and was spoken as well there as in the Latin kingdoms themselves. During this reign, also, a national assembly for the first time became a regular feature of the country. It consisted of an assembly of the nobles and higher clergy, but the burghers were not admitted. In a strict sense there were only two classes of people in Poland at this time—the nobles and common people.

In every way the reign of Casimir was a notable one in Poland. The country was fortified by the erection of fortresses, and the citizens were enrolled to be ready at the call of their country to arms. Commerce was greatly extended, for both Germans and Jews began to come in in great numbers, both races engaging generally in trade. It is said that Casimir was greatly enamoured of a Jewess by the name of Esther, and it was for love of her that he gave special favours to her people. Whether this is true or not, the records are rather uncertain. It is known, however, that the life of Casimir was so immoral that he was excommunicated by the archbishop. The priest who was sent to notify him of his excommunication was thrown into a dungeon, and during the night was cast into the waters of the Vistula. In later years, however, as life was drawing to its close, he submitted himself to the Pope and received absolution. The death of the



TOMB OF CASIMIR III, THE GREAT, CRACOW.



king was caused by a fall from his horse while hunting in the vicinity of Cracow in 1370. An imposing tomb of reddish marble has been erected in his honour in the cathedral of the Wawel.

Casimir died without any immediate heirs, and was succeeded by a nephew, Louis, King of Hungary. It was the effort of Casimir to have his nephew chosen that first taught the nobles their power, and led to subsequent corruption and anarchy at each interregnum. As it was feared that this king might be brought into complications, because he was already the head of another nation, the *pacta conventa* was formulated as a binding obligation between the king and his subjects. This was really the *Magna Charta* of Poland. It protected only the nobles, however, and did not offer any guarantee to the poor serfs. Louis agreed to all of the conditions imposed upon him, but he did not seem to consider his word binding. Serious trouble was only averted by his death, after a few years' reign. His death terminated the direct dynasty of the Piasts in 1382, although it is really continued in the female line.

Following the death of Louis was one of the unfortunate interregnums so common in Polish history. It was two years before Jadwiga, or Hedwiga, the daughter of Louis, succeeded to the throne. She is said to have been a woman of great beauty and spirit. She was not left free in the choice of

a husband, however, as the offer of Jagiello, at that time the ruler of the rival state of Lithuania, was so tempting that the Poles practically compelled Jadwiga to marry this Lithuanian prince. The fact that she was in love with an Austrian archduke did not weigh with the Diet as against ambition and policy. They thought that this was the best way to stop constant warfare with their neighbours, and the Catholic prelate gave his consent. Jagiello promised to unite his own domains with those of Poland, and also to convert his subjects to the Roman Catholic faith.

CHAPTER III

LITHUANIA AND THE JAGIELLOS

The Lithuanians — A pagan stronghold — Mindvog — Gedimin — Livonian Knights — Vilna — Olgerd — Jagiello — Union with Poland — Conversion of Lithuanians — Cracow becomes capital — Wladislas III — Casimir IV — Prussians become vassals — John Albert — Alexander — Sigismund I — Sigismund Augustus.

LITHUANIA, or Litwa, Poland's immediate neighbour on the eastern boundary, was at one time a great power. The several tribes grouped under that name had developed a proud independence and great ferocity in the deep forests and marshes of the Niemen. They warred among themselves when no other tribes threatened them. The different tribes were known as Lithuanians, Letts, Samogilians and White Russians, but the first named were by far the most numerous and maintained the ruling authority.

Lithuania at the time of her greatest expansion reached from the Black Sea to the Baltic. It exercised sovereignty over much of what was later included in Poland, and was then the leading power in Eastern Europe. The language is a Slavonic dialect. The early history of the country is legendary, and little is known of the Lithuanians until the eleventh century. Before that they were simply obscure

barbarians, inhabiting a little-known corner of Europe. Some think they are descendants of the original Ostrogoths, but they are undoubtedly Slavonic and belong to the Aryans. Lithuania was the last great stronghold of pagan worship in Europe, as it was converted to Christianity later than its neighbours. There was a powerful sacerdotal caste, and the high priest was a personage of great influence. The principal deity was Perkun, the god of thunder, as was the Russian Perun. The sacred fire was kept burning constantly before this idol.

Mindvog, who was crowned in 1252, and his son, Gedimin (1315-1340), were powerful sovereigns, and both extended the limits of their kingdom. Mindvog created Lithuanian unity by exterminating the rival princes. "He began," says a chronicle, "by slaying his brothers and his sons; he chased the survivors from the country, and reigned alone over the land of Lithuania." Threatened by the Livonian Knights, an order similar to the Teutonic Knights, Mindvog appealed to the Pope. In response to this appeal a legate of Innocent IV visited Mindvog at Grodno and consecrated him as King of Lithuania after he had received baptism. The danger having passed, Mindvog plunged into the same stream to wash off his baptism, and the sacred fires were kept burning more brightly than ever. He was killed by an assassin, and Gedimin succeeded to the throne.

Gedimin waged a war of conquest and added a number of new provinces to his dominions. Kiev fell to him, and some of the western provinces of Russia acknowledged his sway. The Tartars were held in check by this aggressive sovereign. Under him Vilna (Wilno) was established as the capital. When Gedimin died, his body was burned in a caldron together with his favourite war-horse and groom, according to the Lithuanian rite. His son Olgerd (1345-1377) conquered Vitepsk, Mohilev and Podolia, and even humiliated the strong republic of Novgorod the Great. He also reached the Black Sea in his conquests. The Grand Prince of Moscow trembled on his throne, and the Poles were compelled to fight the aggressive Lithuanians. But Olgerd was finally gathered to his fathers, and his son Jagiello succeeded to the throne by either putting to death or driving from the country all rival claimants. Yet this man proved to be the apostle of Christianity to these people. For a long time Christianity had sought to enter by two different channels — under the Roman form from Poland, and the Greek form from Russia. Many of each faith were numbered among its subjects.

The history of Lithuania and Poland becomes intertwined from the time of the marriage of Jagiello and Jadwiga. The later change of capital to Warsaw was the result of this union, as it was a compromise site almost midway between Vilna and Cracow.

At the present time the population of the Lithuanian provinces is divided among the Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Orthodox faiths. It took a long time to Polonize Lithuania, for the bulk of the people remained Orthodox. The chances are, however, that a close examination would reveal a lot of original heathenism mixed up with the Lithuanian's religious ideas even to this day. He has a great belief in signs and marvels, dreams and omens, magic and witchcraft. Tendencies either to independence or union with Russia frequently arose, especially during the interregnums which followed the death of a sovereign. This was to a great extent due to the antagonism caused by religious differences.

Jagiello was publicly baptized at Cracow in 1386. His subjects were divided into groups and then sprinkled with holy water. To one group would be given the name of Peter; to another Paul or John. It was a repetition of the action of Vladimir at Kiev, after his conversion to the Greek Church. Jagiello overthrew the idol Perkun, and extinguished the sacred fire. The union was not effected without some opposition, for the Lithuanian nobles resisted, but nevertheless they were compelled to submit. So strenuously did Vitovt resist that he was recognized as Grand Duke, and Lithuania always remained a state apart as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, united with Poland under one sovereign. It gradually became more and more Polonized, however, and

the nobility assumed the manners and even the language of the Polish aristocracy.

With this union of Jagiello and Jadwiga the heroic age of Poland began, and this family ruled over the combined countries for a period of almost two centuries. The capital of Lithuania had been at Vilna, or Wilno, and the removal to Cracow caused trouble and dissatisfaction. As the surrounding nations were growing stronger, however, this union was a fortunate thing for Poland. Jagiello, who took the name of Wladislas upon his confirmation, and ruled as Wladislas II, continued to occupy the throne for more than forty years after the death of Hedwiga, in 1389. During this period he was married three different times. The Polish nobles, however, forced a number of concessions from Wladislas before they would submit to his rule. It was during this reign that the celebrated battle of Grünwald took place, in which the Poles obtained such a decisive victory over the Teutonic Knights. It is said that Jagiello was an amiable and considerate man, who aimed to give the country a good government. The Poles were indebted to him for a number of very good laws. Having laid the foundation of Poland's greatness, he died in 1433, and was buried by the side of the Polish kings in Cracow.

Wladislas III, who succeeded his father, Jagiello, was at that time a youth of only ten years. He was likewise elected king of Hungary and Bohemia, a

union which was dissolved during the reign of his successor. His mother and some of the nobles acted as his guardians during his minority, but the real ruler was an ecclesiastic. As a natural result religious bigotry and friction of the alien elements increased. Scarcely had Wladislas escaped from the authority of his guardians, however, before he began a campaign against the Turks. Inexperienced and unprepared in the matter of warfare, he was defeated and perished in battle in 1444, in the twenty-first year of his age.

After another interregnum of almost three years, a brother of Wladislas III, Casimir IV, came to the throne, and his long reign forms a brighter period in Polish history. Under him we find that the Prussians, who had become wearied and weakened by their warfare against the Teutonic Knights, placed themselves under the protection of Casimir in 1454, and became practically vassals of the Poles. The Poles overran practically all of what was then Prussian territory in their warfare against the Knights. The Grand Master of the Knights acknowledged himself as a vassal of the Polish king and Senate. It was at this time that Dantzic became a Polish city and of great consequence in the kingdom, as it was one of the most important towns of the Hanseatic League, that famous merchants' trust of the days gone by. Under Casimir the Diet began to be formed as it existed in the later period of the

country's history. Its real power really dates from this reign. Learning likewise began to spread throughout the nation. The first printing-press was erected at Cracow in 1474. The Polish language began to be cultivated and used by authors, and was written in an elegant form. The reign of Casimir covered a period of almost half a century, during which time the territory had been extended and the constitution developed. He died in 1492, in the castle of Troki, which is not very far from Vilna. His tomb is also in the Wawel.

Casimir was succeeded by his son, John Albert, although not without dispute, because the Lithuanian faction called another son, Alexander. It is the first instance in Polish history that we read of a resort to arms in establishing the succession. Some of the powerful nobles rallied to John Albert, with some armed retainers, and he was crowned as king on the 23rd of September. He was not a strong ruler, and he endeavoured to conciliate the nobles by making some concessions to them. He also increased the power of the nobles over their serfs. Turks and Tartars made trouble for him by incursions into his territory. At this time the towns were composed chiefly of Germans, Jews and Armenians, all of whom were considered practically out of the pale of the law, and could not be admitted to the rights of naturalization. Every gentleman who had a house and a few acres of land could claim

all the privileges of nobility. John Albert died at Thorn of apoplexy in 1501.

John Albert's successor was his brother, Alexander, in the same year. Alexander had married Helen, a daughter of Ivan the Great of Russia, whose mother was Sophia Paleologa, the heir to the crown of Byzantium. From this time the double-headed eagle is added to the escutcheon of Russia. Under Ivan Russia had been formed into a strong autocracy, and from this time becomes a formidable rival of Poland with her weakening central authority. We find them in almost perpetual altercation and conflict in the succeeding years. The *liberum veto* had already made its appearance in the Diet held at Radom in 1505, where it was decided that there must be a unanimity of votes and not simply a majority. Notwithstanding the connection by marriage, war was waged between Poland and Moscow, although the queen seems to have been greatly attached to her husband. The trouble was religion, as Helen refused to become a Roman Catholic, and a separate chapel was maintained for her in Vilna. This concession, and the favours which the king endeavoured to give the Orthodox Church, caused jealousy among the Poles, and alienated the papacy. Alexander died at Thorn on the 19th of August, 1506, of the same complaint as his brother. His widow survived him for several years, but continued to live at Vilna.

In 1507 Sigismund I, also a son of the last Casimir, was crowned as king. He was then about forty years of age. This reign almost corresponds with that of Henry VIII, of England, who died just a year earlier than Sigismund. Many factions arose against him, but this Polish monarch was not to be intimidated. He defeated the Lithuanians, who had revolted, and routed their Russian auxiliaries. The Teutonic Knights were compelled again to acknowledge Polish suzerainty. In addition to outside troubles he had domestic troubles, for his second wife, Bona, an Italian woman, was the prime mover of many intrigues. So strong-willed was she that she acquired complete ascendancy over the mind of her husband, until he was practically little more than a puppet in her hands. The first real rebellion against regal authority likewise occurred in this reign, and was led by a Lithuanian prince. A number of the nobles refused to join the king in a military expedition organized by him. Sigismund died in Cracow, and was buried with his predecessors.

Sigismund was followed by his son Sigismund II Augustus (1548-1572). He had trouble at the beginning of his reign, because he had married in secret before his father's death. When he came to the throne he publicly acknowledged the marriage, and was faithful to his wife, who was a Lithuanian woman of illustrious birth. He refused to break his domestic ties even if this refusal might cause him

the loss of the kingdom. Her death in the early part of his reign, she living only six months as queen, broke down this opposition. She is believed to have been poisoned. Sigismund Augustus was not free from war, as some of his neighbours were still troublesome. War likewise followed with Russia, when the Czar of Moscow invaded Livonia. The czar was victorious, and gained some territory. Lithuania was more closely united to Poland during this reign. There were perhaps at this time more printing-presses in Poland, so we are told, than in any other country of Europe. There were eighty-three towns in which books were printed.

Contrary to the later history of Poland, at this time there was the greatest of religious toleration. The Reformation had gained great headway after the Diet of Worms, in 1520, during the reign of the first Sigismund. Dantzic, Thorn and a number of other cities proved fertile ground for these new doctrines. Even the Teutonic Knights accepted the new faith. When almost all the rest of Europe was involved in persecution of one sect or another, all of these maltreated people were welcomed to Poland. All parties were allowed a perfect liberty of the press, and religious literature of many faiths began to appear from Polish presses. It is true that many quarrels resulted, but I speak of the general policy of the king and the Diet. Some of the leading nobles had publicly avowed the new



SIGISMUND II AUGUSTUS.



faith. A few of the clergy left the Church and married. The term Dissidents, as used in Poland, first included the Orthodox adherents, but it finally designated only the Lutherans and other Protestant bodies.

The death of Sigismund without a direct male heir restored the crown to his subjects for their disposal. With him the direct line of the Jagiellos was ended, although collateral lines still reached the throne. The funeral bell of Sigismund Augustus was the tocsin of anarchy in Poland. The Polish crown became a prize of competition among foreign princes, and the neighbouring potentates began a struggle to put their favourites upon the throne. These conflicting interests were added upon Poland as an additional trouble to the evils of civil dissension.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY ELECTED KINGS

The *Pacta Conventa* — Election of Henry — His flight — Stephen Batory — His marriage to Anne — The Cossacks — The Jesuits — Sigismund III — Poles capture Moscow — Wladislas IV — The Uniates — John Casimir — Rebellion of Cossacks — Zbaraz — War with Sweden — Casimir abdicates.

WITH the death of Sigismund Augustus, the era of elected kings begins. The Diet has now become supreme, and is able to impose its will upon the candidate for the throne. The *liberum veto* has been well established, and with it has grown up corruption. The wealthy nobles lived like potentates, but their wealth came at the expense of the down-trodden peasants. Outwardly, however, Polish magnificence and prodigality was making a profound impression upon Europe.

An interregnum of almost two years followed the death of Sigismund, and during that time the Archbishop of Gnesen exercised the authority. At the meeting of the Diet called to select a new king, in 1573, new laws were passed governing the election of a ruler. It was decided that all the nobles should have a voice in the nomination, and that they should meet on a plain near Warsaw. This city had been agreed upon as the meeting-place of the Diet in 1569, as a partial concession to the Lithuanians.

Heretofore a great many differences and jealousies had constantly arisen between the two peoples. It was not until a little later, however, that it became the capital of the country, and the official residence of the king.

A new coronation oath, called the *pacta conventa*, was agreed upon, by which the monarch was stripped of all actual power. The throne was made entirely elective; a permanent council was to be chosen each year to advise with the king; regular convocations of the Diet were required every two years, and a session was not to exceed six weeks; war was not to be declared, or even a military expedition entered into, or any taxes imposed without the consent of the Diet; the king was neither to marry nor divorce a wife without such consent; he was to have no voice in the election of his successor; and there must be a perfect toleration of all religious bodies. The Roman Catholic religion, however, was designated as the state religion, and the sovereign was obliged to be a confessor of that faith.

There were several candidates for the vacant throne, all of them backed by different factions, but the successful one was Henry, Duke of Anjou, a son of Catherine de Medici, and a brother of the then reigning king of France. He was at this time twenty-three years of age. An embassy was sent to Paris to notify the elected king, consisting of a dozen ambassadors. Among them was the Bishop

of Posen. Their retinue was so numerous that they filled fifty carriages. An account of this embassy which has been handed down to us, written by an eye-witness living in Paris, is as follows:

“ It is impossible to express the general astonishment when we saw these ambassadors in long robes, fur caps, sabres, arrows, and quivers; but our admiration was excessive when we saw the sumptuousness of their equipages, the scabbards of their swords adorned with jewels, their bridles, saddles, and horse-cloths decked in the same way, and the air of consequence and dignity by which they were distinguished. One of the most remarkable circumstances was their facility in expressing themselves, in Latin, French, German and Italian. These four languages were as familiar to them as their vernacular tongue. There were only two men of rank at court who could answer them in Latin, the Baron of Milan and the Marquis of Castelnau-Mauvissiere. They had been commissioned expressly to support the honour of the French nation, that had reason to blush at their ignorance in this point. They (the ambassadors) spoke our language with so much purity, that one would have taken them rather for being educated on the banks of the Seine and the Loire, than for inhabitants of the countries which are watered by the Vistula or the Dnieper, which put our courtiers to the blush, who knew nothing, but were open enemies of all science; so that when



HENRY, DUKE OF ANJOU (AFTERWARDS HENRY III, KING OF FRANCE).

their guests questioned them, they answered only with signs or blushes."

Henry accepted the offer of the Polish crown, although he hesitated a little about the clause granting absolute religious freedom. It must be remembered that the massacre of St. Bartholomew had occurred in Paris only the year previous. This knowledge made some of his future subjects uneasy. A great banquet was given in his honour. The ceremony of taking the oath was carried out with great pomp in the famous cathedral of Notre Dame on September 11. Henry knelt before the great altar and took the required oath. His brother Charles IX likewise swore to aid Poland in case of need against her enemies. The Polish delegation carried out their part of the program with great dignity, refusing to yield anything whatever in their demands. They would not deliver up the diploma of election until the two kings had confirmed all the articles in the covenant heretofore agreed to by the French commissioners. The ceremonies in Paris were very elaborate. The Parisian crowds greeted Henry with the cry of "Long live the King of Poland," when he made his triumphal entry into the city. Triumphal arches had been erected, ornamented with statues and inscriptions, and altogether the reign seemed to start out with great eclat. But pageants and ceremonies make neither a good king nor obedient subjects.

Henry was crowned at Cracow on the 21st of February, 1574. He was not a good choice for Poland, however, because at the very time of his election he had been fighting the Protestants in his own country. Now he was called upon to exercise toleration. He really accepted the crown reluctantly, and it was only the tinsel which appealed to him. He looked upon residence in Poland almost as an exile, because it took him away from his beloved Paris. He soon grew tired of the turbulent Poles, among whom he was now called upon to live, as they seemed to him so inferior to the French, and especially the Parisians. He practically immured himself in his palace, where he lived a life of indulgence. His reign really lasted only about five months.

News reached Henry one day of the death of his brother, Charles IX, by which he inherited the French throne. Instead of calling together the Diet, and frankly stating the situation to them, and asking permission to go to France, he chose a different course. He wanted to get away before the death of his brother became known. He gave a banquet in honour of the sister of the late king, Anne Jagielonka, at which he seemed to be in unusual spirits. After retiring to his apartments, he went with an attendant to where horses had secretly been stationed, and with only a few companions left the kingdom never to return. His departure was not even known in Cracow until the following morning,

when the Grand Chamberlain found the king's bedroom unoccupied. Pursuit was made, but Henry did not stop to parley until he had quitted Polish territory. When the Polish commissioners approached, he promised to return after matters were settled in Paris; but he did not. In 1589 Henry suffered death at the hands of an assassin. The pride of the Poles was greatly piqued at being thus deserted by their sovereign, but the country doubtless profited by the occurrence.

Another unfortunate interregnum followed this flight of Henry on the 18th of July, 1574, which lasted almost two years. During this time the Tartars made a raid and carried off many captives. As was generally the case at each successive vacancy, there were two irreconcilable factions contending for supremacy. One of these factions chose Maximilian of Austria, and the other elected Stephen Batory, Duke of Transylvania. Batory, always vigorous and prompt in action, hastened to Poland upon being informed of his election, and was crowned at Cracow. The death of Maximilian soon afterwards quieted the prospects of trouble from that source. The new king signed the *pacta conventa*, and married the sister of the late king, Anne Jagiellonka. Batory was descended from an ancient family, and was possessed of rare qualities as well as high talent. He had raised himself to a high position by his valour, and he proved to be an ener-

getic ruler, reigning over the country for ten years. He defeated the Russians in a series of battles, captured many towns, and was thus able to check the encroachment of the Russian ruler known as Ivan the Terrible.

Batory added to the strength of the nation by establishing a standing army. He brought the Cossacks into some military order, and established several regiments from members of these warring tribes, who were kept continually under arms. Up to this time the Cossacks had simply been wandering marauders, who plundered Poles, Russians or Turks as often as the opportunity afforded. In fact, the name is a Tartar word meaning “wanderer.” It is pronounced with a strong accent on the second syllable. They were ruled by a chief, called the *hetman* or *attaman*, who was entitled to carry a staff as his emblem of authority. Their numbers were constantly added to by runaway serfs and vagrants of all descriptions from Russia, Poland and the Tartar Khaniates.

There were several distinct tribes of the Cossacks. Those who lived along the Dnieper River were called the Zaporogians, or Zaporozhians. Their government was very republican in form. Each year the old officers laid down their duties in the presence of a general assembly, and new ones were chosen. They had a series of fortified camps along Southern Russia from the mouth of the Dnieper to the Sea



STEPHANVS
BATHORIVS
WEIWODEN AVS
SIEBNVRGEN.
M. D. LXXVI.

STEPHEN BATORY.

of Azov. Women were not allowed to live in their camps. The Cossacks really had no sense of nationality, and no loyalty to any government. "Free as a Cossack" is still a popular expression in Russia, for it designates the man who has never borne a yoke either foreign or domestic. These are the people who dwelt in the Ukraine, which the Polish "pans" had gradually brought under their rule and which had become a centre of agricultural speculation.

The reign of Batory was vigorous in every way, and resulted in very much good for the whole country. He attempted to curb the turbulent nobility as much as was possible. But Batory himself was obliged to submit to still further encroachments upon royal prerogatives. A body of sixteen senators was chosen to wait upon him, whose opinion on important matters he was obliged to follow. It is believed that he intended to make the throne hereditary, but his failing health prevented the carrying out of such an ambition. Few monarchs are more respected by the Poles than this one. His election had been satisfactory to the Dissidents at first, for it was believed that he himself was a Protestant. At least his ancestors had been. Before being crowned, however, he made public his allegiance to the Roman Catholic faith. His wife was a bigoted Catholic and probably influenced him to some extent, although their union was not a partic-

ularly happy one. Batory ruled only ten years; he died on the 12th of December, 1566, being only fifty-four years of age. His wife survived him ten years. Both are buried in Cracow, where handsome monuments stand to their memory. One would judge that the queen was of a very masculine type, if the effigy on the tomb is a true likeness.

King Batory did one thing which resulted in as much mischief as anything else in the later history of Poland, and that was in introducing and favouring the Jesuits. Poland suffered, as did all of Latin America, from the unyielding and narrow policy of this powerful and aggressive order of priests. The educational advancement introduced by them did not compensate for the evils that accompanied it. A few members of that body had penetrated that country prior to his reign, but their first formal introduction and recognition is due to Batory. He established a university at Vilna, which was placed in charge of this order. Jesuit schools spread all over the country. At Riga he ordered a church to be taken from the Lutherans and given to the Jesuits, and a convent of that order was established in that same city. Both of these places were centres of non-Catholics. As a result, during his reign there were many sanguinary quarrels between the Catholics and Protestants, in which the latter were generally discomfited. From this time the Romanists had the upper hand, and they did not hesitate to force

their power. Many of the prominent families in Lithuania left the Dissidents and joined that Church.

It was during the reign of Batory also that the results of the strange government of Poland began to show in European politics. The effect of the Reformation was being felt all over Europe, and the peasants began to have aspirations for better conditions. There was a feeling in the air that the power and privilege of the aristocracy must be checked. Poland had heretofore stood aloof from all the conflicts which agitated the rest of Europe. She did not maintain any ambassadors at the other courts, for the reason that the nobles feared to entrust such a position to any one out of fear that he might use it in the interest of the king who had appointed him. The nobles were jealous of anything that gave power or privilege to the sovereign. Only occasionally do we read of special embassies being sent to foreign courts for extraordinary purposes. This was only one of the great mistakes of Poland.

The death of Batory brought about other violent scenes in the Diet, for the country was divided into many factions. An Austrian, a Russian, and a Swedish prince contested for the throne. Sigismund, the Swedish scion, was elected, and his faction took Maximillian, the Austrian prince, prisoner. Sigismund was related to the Jagiellos on the female side, his mother having been a sister of Sigismund Au-

gustus. This relationship reconciled the Poles to his accession. But his claims to the Swedish throne brought a series of conflicts between the two countries. Maximillian likewise contested his claims to the Polish throne. Sigismund really seemed to prefer the throne of Sweden, but a large element of the Swedes feared him because of his adoption of the Roman Catholic religion, and Sweden at this time was under the control of the Protestants. He made a journey to Sweden, however, and was actually crowned king of that country in 1594, upon promising to allow his subjects religious liberty. He immediately violated these promises, because of his inherent bigotry, and returned again to Poland. The Swedish throne was declared vacant, and another king was selected. Sigismund headed an expedition to regain his throne, but was defeated in a decisive battle. The later history of Sigismund is connected with Poland alone. His marriage to an Austrian princess without the consent of the Diet was in violation of the *pacta conventa*, and aroused great opposition among the nobles.

It was during the reign of Sigismund that the false Dmitri, who was a disrobed monk, succeeded in placing himself upon the throne of Moscow by the aid of Polish arms. This is one of the most curious incidents in authentic history. Sigismund, who was doubtless encouraged by the Pope, hoped to restore Catholicism in Russia. Upon the murder of Dmitri,

after only eleven months' reign, Sigismund started for Moscow. The citizens of Moscow had requested the Polish king to send his son to rule over them. Russia was then experiencing what historians term the "Time of Trouble." Villages had been laid waste by the raids and counter-raids of the opposing factions. Disorder, confusion and universal discontent prevailed. Any change that promised relief seemed better than the anarchy that existed. It is always a source of satisfaction to Poles to recall how the Russian czar was dragged through the streets of Moscow as captive. He was even brought back to Warsaw a prisoner, which greatly elated the Poles, and died in that city.

The son of Sigismund, Wladislas, was set upon the throne of Moscow, but did not reign there long because of the opposition of the Orthodox Church. The Poles were unyielding, and the Muscovites feared for the supremacy of their faith. A butcher of Nijni Novgorod, by name Minin, led the uprising, aided by a prince. In six months they moved upon Moscow. The Poles were driven out of the Kremlin walls in November, 1612; Moscow and Orthodoxy were saved. The power of the Russian *boyards* (nobles) was lessened from this time and the central government strengthened; that of the Polish nobles continued to increase and the central authority to grow weaker. Russia gradually increased in power as her rival grew less powerful. The last stage of

rivalry between the two powerful Slavonic states had been entered upon.

Insurrections arose within his own kingdom among the nobles, which also made considerable trouble for Sigismund. Rebellion was even sanctioned by the constitution, if the king failed to be obedient, and Sigismund looked upon his own oath lightly. The rebels had no good leader, so that the king was able to defeat them and restored at least a semblance of order. Having no other recourse, they were all pardoned. The Cossacks insistently demanded representation in the Diet, and their demands were bluntly refused. This led to a bloody rebellion which began in the next reign. Sigismund died on the 30th of April, 1632, the queen having died in the preceding year. His reign was a long one, but it was full of disasters for Poland. The country was in a condition of decadence. The Dissidents were estranged, and the Jesuits were very active. Religious persecutions against the Orthodox Church were common, and altogether this reign was disastrous. Severe statutes were passed against all forms of heresy. With such acts began a discontent which aided in the gradual alienation of large sections of the country. It was during the time of Sigismund that the Uniates arose, a body which seceded from the Orthodox Church. They were received into the Catholic fold upon accepting certain articles of faith, although allowed to retain their old Sla-

vonie ritual, and to follow their former practice in some matters. The Uniates still exist, but they are not so strong as in former years, except in Galicia.

Following Sigismund comes his son, Wladislas IV, who was elected by the Diet without serious opposition. War was again declared against the Russians, but it was soon brought to a close after the election of Michael Romanov to the vacant throne of Russia. He was the first of the family who still rule in that kingdom, and the third century since their accession has just been celebrated. Wladislas renounced all his own claims to the Muscovite throne. This reign was disturbed by constant quarrels between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and many enactments prejudicial to the latter were passed.

Since the flight of Henry there had been little intercourse between Poland and France. But now another embassy, even more resplendent than the one sent to invite Henry to become king, was dispatched to Paris in 1645 to solicit the hand of the princess, Marie Louise, in marriage, as the third wife of Wladislas. He had become infatuated with this woman through seeing a portrait of her. This embassy of Polish nobles with shaved heads, and dressed in splendid clothes, made a great impression in Paris. One can get an idea of the size of the retinue when told that thirty footmen, dressed in red, followed the head commissioner alone. Precious stones were worn as jewels and sparkled on

their arms. The bishop who accompanied them fairly blazed with precious stones. The royal consent was given, and Marie Louise was married by proxy in the Palais Royal, and a crown was placed upon her head. She was then brought back to Poland, and there became the wife of Wladislas. This union did not last long, for the king lived less than two years after the marriage; but she married his successor, and exercised great influence in Polish affairs. Wladislas died on the 20th of May, 1648, while his kingdom was in the greatest political confusion.

Wladislas left no children, and the unusual happened. His brother, John Casimir, or Jan Kazimierz, who had been a monk, and had actually been created a cardinal by the Pope, was elected to succeed him. His election occurred on the 20th day of November, 1648, the interregnum being unusually brief, and he was crowned on the 17th of January following. The Russian czar, the father of Peter the Great, had himself been a candidate for the throne. It is of Casimir that Byron speaks as follows:

“ He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again,
And, (save debates in Warsaw’s diet)
He reign’d in most unseemly quiet.”

This verse is not true to fact, however, for almost the entire reign of Casimir was filled with disturb-

ances. When he came to the throne the Cossacks, under Chmielnicki, were in rebellion, and were united with the Tartars under Tugai Bey. They were Orthodox in faith, and were dissatisfied over the restrictions under which they laboured. One of their *hetmans*, who had gone to Warsaw, had been treacherously killed. With them also it was to some extent a holy war, for both Roman Catholics and Jews were a special object of hatred. When Casimir tried to negotiate peace, Chmielnicki said: "The time for negotiations is past. At first I took up arms for my own injuries — now I fight for the true faith." He finally appealed to the Russian Czar, and placed himself and his followers under the protection of Moscow.

The rebellion lasted for several years. It is this rebellion that Sienkiewicz has immortalized in "With Fire and Sword." No more vivid picture of the lawlessness that prevailed over the Ukraine could be portrayed than this work. The massacres and cruelties were as barbaric as took place on the American frontier during the western march of the white man. The final battle was fought at Zbaraz, a town now in Austrian Poland, and only a few miles from Tarnopol. Nine thousand picked Polish warriors defended themselves at Zbaraz against a combined Tartar and Cossack army estimated at one hundred thousand or more. The old castle and a part of the old wall still remain. The modern town

contains some six or seven thousand inhabitants, most of whom are Jews.

During the reign of John Casimir occurred the first incident in which a member of the Diet brought the proceedings to a close by the exercise of the *liberum veto*. In Polish it is called *nieposwalam*, meaning "I forbid," or "I protest." Casimir made an elaborate expedition against the Cossacks, and for this received a sacred helmet and sword from Pope Innocent X, who regarded any victory over a non-Catholic as worthy of such decorations. Casimir also had the ambition to become King of Sweden, but by this time a vigorous ruler was on that throne with the name of Charles Gustavus. He made an expedition against the Poles, aided by Polish rebels, and both Warsaw and Cracow submitted to him, while the king fled to Silesia. His subjects rallied around him, however, so that he eventually recovered the lost territory and drove the Swedes out of the country. He married his brother's widow, the French princess. It is said on good authority that the Swedish king actually proposed the dismemberment of the country to the Elector of Brandenburg, by which that prince would get Great Poland, which did eventually fall to his successors. Casimir finally gave up all pretensions to the throne of Sweden, and ceded the province of Livonia to that country. Smolensk and Kiev were also granted to the Czar Alexis, but the

latter was to have been given back in two years time.

The reign of Casimir was unfortunate in many ways, both in its internal policy and in its foreign relations. Personally he was an amiable, but rather weak man. The king himself seemed to be entirely at the mercy of the queen, who was ambitious, and the Jesuits. It was not to be expected that a man who had taken the vows of a monk would be very liberal in his religious sympathies. Going against his advice, the nobles refused to permanently settle the question of succession, and it was then that Casimir spoke words which seem prophetic, as follows:

“ I hope I may be a false prophet in stating that you have to fear the dismemberment of the republic. The Russians will attempt to seize the grand duchy of Lithuania as far as the rivers Bug and Narew, and almost to the Vistula. The Elector of Brandenburg will have a design on Great Poland and the neighbouring palatinates, and will contend for the aggrandizement of both Prussians. The house of Austria will turn its attention to Cracow and the adjacent palatinates.”

Queen Marie Louise died in 1667, and this event seems to have greatly affected John Casimir. He was now sixty-eight years of age; he was worn out by the factious spirit of the Diet and the nobility in general. He consulted other sovereigns about resigning, but they attempted to dissuade him. Never-

theless he finally reached an unalterable determination, being thoroughly weary of his position as ruler, and resigned the sceptre on the 16th of September, 1668, in the following words:

“ It is now two hundred and eighty years that you have been governed by my family. The reign of my ancestors is past, and mine is going to expire. Fatigued by the labours of war, the cares of the cabinet, and the weight of age; oppressed with the burdens and solitudes of a reign of more than twenty-one years; — I, your king and father, return into your hands what the world esteems above all things — a crown; and choose for my throne six feet of earth, where I shall sleep in peace with my fathers.”

After his abdication John Casimir retired to France, where he was made abbot of a monastery until his death in 1672. It is stated, however, upon quite good authority, that he again threw off his monastic garb in order to marry a woman with whom he had fallen in love — a laundress. In his early years Casimir had been held a prisoner in France, while travelling through that country. His body was removed to Cracow several years after his death, and was buried in the cathedral. With him ended the old line of Piasts, the Jagiellos, and the branch line known as the Vasas, who, with the exceptions of Henry and Batory, had ruled the country from the time of its inception.

CHAPTER V

JOHN SOBIESKI

Michael Korybut — Election of Sobieski — Turkish Invasion of Austria — Sobieski's great victory at Vienna — His political troubles — His marital troubles — Loss of Kiev and Smolensk — His death.

ONE of the greatest men ever produced by Poland was that inveterate enemy of the Turk, John Sobieski. We begin to read of him in the closing years of the reign of John Casimir, for his victories over the enemies of his country. By the time of the abdication of Casimir he had already made a great name for himself. Sobieski threw the strength of his support to the Prince of Condé. Even with all the turbulence that attended the various Polish kings, there were still found many candidates who were willing to assume this troublesome sceptre. At the election Diet of 1660 a number of the powerful nobles brought with them armed dragoons. One of the Radziwells is said to have brought with him such a private army numbering more than six hundred men. It is not surprising that some of the delegates were killed in the confusion and excitement that ensued.

The successful candidate for the throne was Michael Korybut, a Polish gentleman, rather obscure, unknown, and even deformed, who had never

held a public office or even transacted any public business. He was so poor that few had considered his candidacy. But he had some of the ancient Piast blood in his veins. It was simply one of those inexplicable movements that occasionally occur in national history. It is even said Michael accepted this unexpected honour with apprehension. He shrank from the strife of the field of battle, and had practically shut himself up in a monastery at Warsaw in the hopes that he might live his life unobserved. He was practically dragged to the throne, and is said to have wept at being obliged to wear a crown. The nobles swore not to invoke the *liberum veto*, but the same Diet was brought to an end by its use. It was not long, however, that Michael was obliged to wear a crown, willingly or unwillingly, as he expired at Lemberg after having reigned a little over four years, and in the thirty-fifth year of his age. His death was so sudden that it was believed by many to have been the result of some kind of poison. Those who do not accept this view say that it was due to his own gluttony. His character seems to have been really contemptible, and it is almost impossible to find any compensating qualities in his life. Poland had indeed sunk into a debased condition at this period in her history. But a brighter day was approaching.

After the death of Michael Korybut, one of the most turbulent Diets in Polish history met at War-

saw in April, 1674, to elect a successor. There were several candidates for the position, among them being Charles of Lorain, Philip of Neuburg, and the Prince of Condé. The first named was Austria's choice, the second France's protégé, and the third was the favourite of a large element of the Poles themselves. France and Austria were always rivals in the effort to influence the election of Poland's kings.

While the Diet was in its most turbulent condition, one of the nobles was heard above all the other confusion to say: "No more foreigners. Let a Pole rule over Poland. Among us is a man who, having saved the state ten times by his counsels and his victories, is regarded by all the world, as well as by ourselves, as the greatest, the first of the sons of Poland." Then at the close of this speech, advocating the choice of one of their own number, he shouted: "Take for your king John Sobieski."

Sobieski was not without his enemies, and these made themselves heard. It was late in the evening, and many wanted to make a choice that night, as they had become tired of the sittings. Sobieski himself made a speech advising delay until the morning, but it was this speech that won him his election, and he was at once chosen king, with the title of John III, on the 19th of May, 1674.

John Sobieski had already made a reputation for himself as a soldier in leading Polish troops against

Poland's enemies, and in particular the Turks. The victory of Chocim, over the Turks, on the day following Michael's death, had placed him before the people in the light of a popular hero. During the latter part of Michael's reign he had practically wielded the sceptre. He was descended from illustrious ancestors. Both his father and grandfather had distinguished themselves in Polish history, the former being castellan of Cracow. He had studied the art of war in France, whither he had been sent in his youth. There he joined in all the frivolity of that age. But he soon afterwards threw aside dissipation, and developed into the greatest warrior of his age. In person this king is described by a contemporary writer, quoted by Mr. Morfill,¹ as "a tall and corpulent prince, large-faced, and full eyed, and goes always in the same dress with his subjects, with his hair cut round about his ears like a monk, and wears a fur cap, but extraordinary rich with diamonds and jewels, large whiskers (moustaches) and no neck-cloth. . . . He carries always a large scimitar by his side, the sheath equally flat and broad from the handle to the bottom, and curiously set with diamonds."

Some enthusiasts acclaim Sobieski's election as a popular uprising on the part of the people, while others charge him with continual and deliberate

¹ This quotation, as well as some other citations where specific credit is not given, is from the "Story of Poland," by W. R. Morfill, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons of London and New York.

scheming for the election. I am inclined to the latter view as the more natural one, but that does not discredit him or his patriotism. He was far superior to most of his predecessors. War with the Turks began so soon after Sobieski's election that the coronation ceremonies had to be delayed while he took the field against the enemy. He fought the Turks with a vengeance, as though each one was a personal enemy to be destroyed.

It was ten years after his election that Sobieski's greatest military triumph came, and one which is noted in the world's annals. This was the rescue of Vienna from the Turks. The Moslem general, Kara Mustapha, with a force of three hundred thousand men, had marched in from Belgrade, burning and plundering all before him wherever resistance was offered, and was now besieging Austria's capital. He had been joined by the Hungarians, who were in revolt against Leopold of Austria, and his journey through Hungary had been practically unopposed. The besiegers had thrown themselves around that city in a crescent formation. The march of the Turks had been like an Oriental invasion, for in addition to men and horses they had herds of camels and buffaloes. Sobieski himself writes of the luxury of the Turkish camp. "It is impossible to describe," says he in a letter to his wife, "the refinement of luxury which the Vizier had collected in his tents. There were baths, little

gardens with fountains, even a parrot, which our soldiers pursued but could not capture."

The Austrian emperor, Leopold, fled in terror from his capital of Vienna, followed by the principal nobility. An urgent call came to Sobieski to lead his Polish troops to the defence of Christendom. A little matter of etiquette and personal pride nearly defeated this coalition. Sobieski declined to lend aid unless Leopold addressed him as "His Majesty," and Leopold refused for some time. At last the Austrian emperor reluctantly yielded, and Sobieski at once sent a message that he would start for Vienna just as soon as his troops could be ready. Leopold had become very humble, for he writes: "It is not, therefore, your troops, sire, that we expect, but your majesty's own presence; being fully persuaded that if your royal presence will vouchsafe to appear at the head of our forces, though less numerous than those of the enemy, your name alone, which is so justly dreaded by them, will make the defeat certain." He had now been king for several years, and during the last five years he had not taken any active part in warfare, as peace had reigned in Poland. It was only an external peace, however, for never before had the assemblies of the nobles been so rebellious; never before had such anarchistic conditions existed in the political life.

The force within the walls of Vienna was comparatively small — only about twenty thousand

armed men — and the hardships were increasing daily because of the large number of non-combatants who had to be fed. There were mines and counter-mines; ferocious assaults of the enemy were met by the determined resistance of the defenders. Courage and intrepidity were everywhere exhibited. By the time Sobieski approached Vienna his army was swelled to some seventy thousand men, made up of Poles and Germans. The city was almost in its last gasp. A serious fire, and disease due to poor food, had added to the horrors of the continual bombardment. The heroism of a Pole, named Kolszicki, who acted as a spy, is noted in Vienna. Conversant with the Turkish language and customs, he successfully passed through the encircling lines and reached the Austrian army, but not without many exciting adventures. His return trip was equally successful, and he brought back a definite promise of succor. As a reward Kolszicki was given permission to establish the first coffee-house in Vienna. This is the reason — so it is said — that Vienna rolls came to be made in the shape of the crescent.

On the 12th day of September, 1683 (Sunday), after mass had been heard, Sobieski appeared at the head of his troops with his head shaven after the Polish fashion, and started the assault. He at once saw the weak points of the enemy's position. "This man," says he, "is badly encamped; he knows nothing of war; we shall certainly beat him."

The Turkish army had begun to become demoralized by the length of the siege, disease and superstition. The assault was made simultaneously on the centre and wings of the enemy. Sobieski kept himself in the thickest of the battle, crying: "Not to us, not to us, O Lord, but to thy name be the glory." The Turks, although greatly outnumbering their assailants, were overpowered by the fiery onslaught of the Poles. Several of the pashas were slain, and the Vizier himself fled with the remnant of his army. "I told you," one of the generals is reported to have told the Grand Vizier, after he had recognized Sobieski, "that if we had to deal with him (Sobieski), all we could do would be to run away." This unfortunate officer was compelled to submit to death for this defeat. But he did so stoically. When he beheld the messengers of the sultan approach, he yielded to the bow-string and his head was sent to the sultan. The skull may now be seen in the Arsenal Museum of Vienna.

" . . . the Imperial City stands released
From bondage threatened by the embattled East,
And Christendom respires; from guilt and shame
Redeemed, from miserable fear set free
By one day's feat, one mighty victory.
— Chant the Deliverer's praise in every tongue! "

The booty yielded by this victory was immense, and Sobieski's share alone is said to have yielded several million ducats. Everything was abandoned

by the frenzied Turks in their mad flight. Rich tents, superb equipages, and jewelled weapons were among the trophies. The people in the besieged city went wild over the Polish hero; people fell on their faces before his horse, and even kissed his boots. In a letter he says: "I have been in two churches, where the people kissed my hands, feet, and clothes; others, who could only touch me at a distance, cried out, 'Ah! let me kiss your victorious hands.'" Te Deum was celebrated in St. Stephen's Cathedral. The preacher used for his text: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." The people had already suffered much from hunger and the plague.

Excellent accounts of this battle are given in the letters written by Sobieski to his wife, which are still preserved. He addresses her as "Only joy of my soul, charming and much-loved Marietta." He took one of the finely enamelled stirrups of the Vizier and gave it to an orderly, saying: "Take this stirrup to the queen, and tell her that the person to whom it belonged is defeated." Europe went wild with praises of the Polish king — that is, all except France, and Louis XIV could see good in nothing that saved the integrity of Austria. In the following year Sobieski won another victory over the Turks, and took possession of Moldavia. With his Turkish captives he built the fine mansion near Warsaw known as Willanow.

The real troubles of the reign of John III Sobieski began soon after his great victory over the Turks. Constant disputes in the Diet embittered his reign, the Jesuits caused trouble, and he meditated abdicating on at least two occasions. The rebellious Diet exhibited more anarchy than ever before. The Jesuit trouble he succeeded in managing fairly well, and he checked their effrontery. But in the Diet he sometimes was obliged to endure actual insult from some of the most turbulent members. Some of the meetings resembled riots rather than legislative sessions. He attempted some rather high-handed measures, such as calling the Diet one year for Warsaw when it should have met at Grodno. This angered the Lithuanians, and they refused to come. The tribunals were everywhere exceedingly corrupt. But his greatest troubles were domestic.

The wife of Sobieski was a French woman, named Marie Casimire, who had originally been maid of honour to Queen Marie Louise, wife to the two preceding Polish kings. She, herself, had been married to Count Zamoyski, and afterwards became the wife of Sobieski. She might really be termed a sort of adventuress. One could judge from the letters of Sobieski to his wife, which have been preserved, that she was jealous, for he is continually protesting his love and affection for her. Sobieski was a man of rather simple tastes, and was accused of being niggardly, but his wife was ambitious, rapacious.

cious and revengeful both by nature and training. As a result she was continually fostering discontentment at home and in the court, and undid much that her husband attempted to accomplish. The *pacta conventa*, which each king was obliged to subscribe, expressly forbade female influence in the policy of the kingdom, but Marie managed her husband, and sometimes the Diet, according to her own sweet will. She attended all the debates, so we are told, being hid so that she could not be seen. Sobieski was passionately fond of his wife, even when he must have known of her real character. She was very vain, and her court consisted of an even dozen of ladies-in-waiting — all daughters of palatines, and of the highest rank. At Willanow is shown the cabinet used by her, which reveals her vanity. In this room her own portrait is set at every convenient point of vantage. In her youth she is said to have been unusually handsome.

Sobieski was versatile, and is said to have been able to converse in Latin, French, Italian, German, and the Turkish languages, in addition to his own. He was greatly devoted to science as well. The years and physical ailments at last began to tell on the king, but when a suggestion was made to him by a bishop, quotes Mr. Morfill, at the request of his wife, that he ought to make a will, he said rather sarcastically: “ My orders are not attended to while I am alive; can I expect to be obeyed when I am

dead? Have not the regulations made by the kings my predecessors been despised after their deaths? Where corruption universally prevails, judgment is obtained by money; the voice of conscience is not heard, and reason and equity are no more."

Sobieski clearly saw the ills which his country suffered. He died on the 17th of June, 1696, and was buried in the Wawel with the other Polish kings. His wife, the beautiful and capricious Marie, to whom Sobieski addressed such loving epistles, and whom he styled the only joy of his soul, spent her later years either at Rome or in a French castle given her by Louis XIV, where she died in 1716. Her remains were likewise conveyed to Cracow and interred in the cathedral. The Sobieski family is now extinct, although he left several sons and a daughter. A granddaughter married James Stuart, the pretender to the English throne, and she is buried in St. Peter's at Rome. It was a supposed descendant who is made the hero of the novel "Thaddeus of Warsaw," which has been read by so many thousands.

As a result of the continual wars in Sobieski's reign the common people suffered a great deal, as they were called upon to make heavy contributions to meet the necessary expenses. At the same time the nobles lived in the greatest luxury. A nobleman would not think of making a call except in a carriage drawn by a half-dozen horses. The greatest pomp

was shown at marriages and funerals. With all the virtue inherent in Sobieski, the decline of Poland undoubtedly began during his reign. In war he was a lion, but in peace he was the plaything of others. There were at all times corrupt nobles in the pay of other nations who were ready to make trouble.

Sobieski ceded to Russia the cities of Kiev and Smolensk, and also granted to Russia the protection of the members of the Orthodox Church. This allowed the entering of the wedge which finally resulted in the destruction of Poland, for it finally led the Cossacks of the Ukraine to welcome the protection of Russia. This act was likewise done without the consent of the Diet. He was paid a large sum of money down by Russia, with the promise of further remittances, so that this treaty was looked upon as bought and a disgraceful yielding. It stands as one indelible blot on the character of a man who was truly a great man. But he really outlived his glory. During the last few years of his life he was practically in his dotage. He was the last king of Poland who might be termed an independent monarch, for foreign influence became more and more marked in the time of his successors.

CHAPTER VI

THE BEGINNING OF DECADENCE

The Electors of Saxony — Augustus II takes the Polish throne — Peter the Great and Charles XII — Stanislaus Leszczynski — Religious intolerance — Russia becomes dominant — Augustus III — The Saxon rule unfortunate.

AFTER the death of Sobieski began the real decline of Poland. Heretofore there had been at least flashes of grandeur; now all was gloom, turmoil and decay, with complete annihilation less than a century distant. The use of foreign troops in placing and supporting the king upon the throne is introduced to the great detriment of the country. A great confusion arose over the question of a successor to John III Sobieski. One faction desired the election of James Sobieski, son of the deceased king, and at one time a large faction appears to have favoured him; but it is said that his mother did all she could to prevent his election, and probably was instrumental in making it impossible.

The two leading candidates for the throne of Poland were the Prince of Conti, a nephew of Louis XIV of France, and the most popular with the Poles, and Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony. The latter was a young, wealthy and ambitious man. Formerly he had been a Lutheran, which

raised considerable opposition from the clergy, but about three years before this he had abjured that faith and embraced Catholicism. At the election held on the 27th of June, 1697, both candidates were elected king by their partisans. The archbishop, however, declared Conti king; but Augustus had ten thousand Saxon soldiers behind him, and this was a great element of strength in the condition of the Poland of that day. It was necessary that Augustus be crowned king, and this requirement presented some difficulties. All of the regalia was locked up in the treasury at Cracow in the keeping of officers opposed to him. The law forbade the breaking of the doors, but they got around this by breaking down the walls and secured the regalia. As the archbishop was opposed to the Saxon candidate, his office was declared vacant and a new archbishop appointed. There was still another impediment. It was necessary that the funeral of the late king precede the crowning, and the corpse was in the hands of the opposing party at Warsaw. An effigy was secured, over which funeral ceremonies were held; the coronation followed, and the Elector of Saxony was proclaimed king under the title of Augustus II.

Poland at this time was rent between the factions of the Sapiehas and Oginskis, who carried on open warfare with each other. The *pacta conventa* required Augustus to dismiss his Saxon troops, as the employment of foreign soldiers was forbidden. He

felt that his own position was too insecure to warrant this, so, as a pretext, he employed these soldiers in warring against the Turks, which was always popular with the Poles because of their religious hatred. When that war was settled, he found another pretext for retaining them in some grievance against Sweden. Without the consent of the Diet he entered into a secret treaty with Peter the Great to wrest some of the Swedish possessions from that country. These two monarchs met in the town of Birze, and it is said that the meeting was characterized more by its drunkenness and debauchery than the dignity which should have characterized a meeting of the rulers of two important nations.

Peter and Augustus, however, did not know the youthful King of Sweden, Charles XII. This king was only eighteen years old at that time, but he was destined to wield a great influence in Europe for a few years. As soon as he was apprised of the designs of the Polish and Russian sovereigns, he marched against them without any delay. He won a notable victory over the Russians at Narva in 1700, when the Russian forces outnumbered his own five to one. Charles was a true knight-errant. The spirit of the old Scandinavian Vikings seems to have been revived in him. Their deeds and the career of Alexander the Great were ever before his eyes. "He dreams of nothing but war; he behaves as one who thinks that God directly inspires him for what



PETER THE GREAT

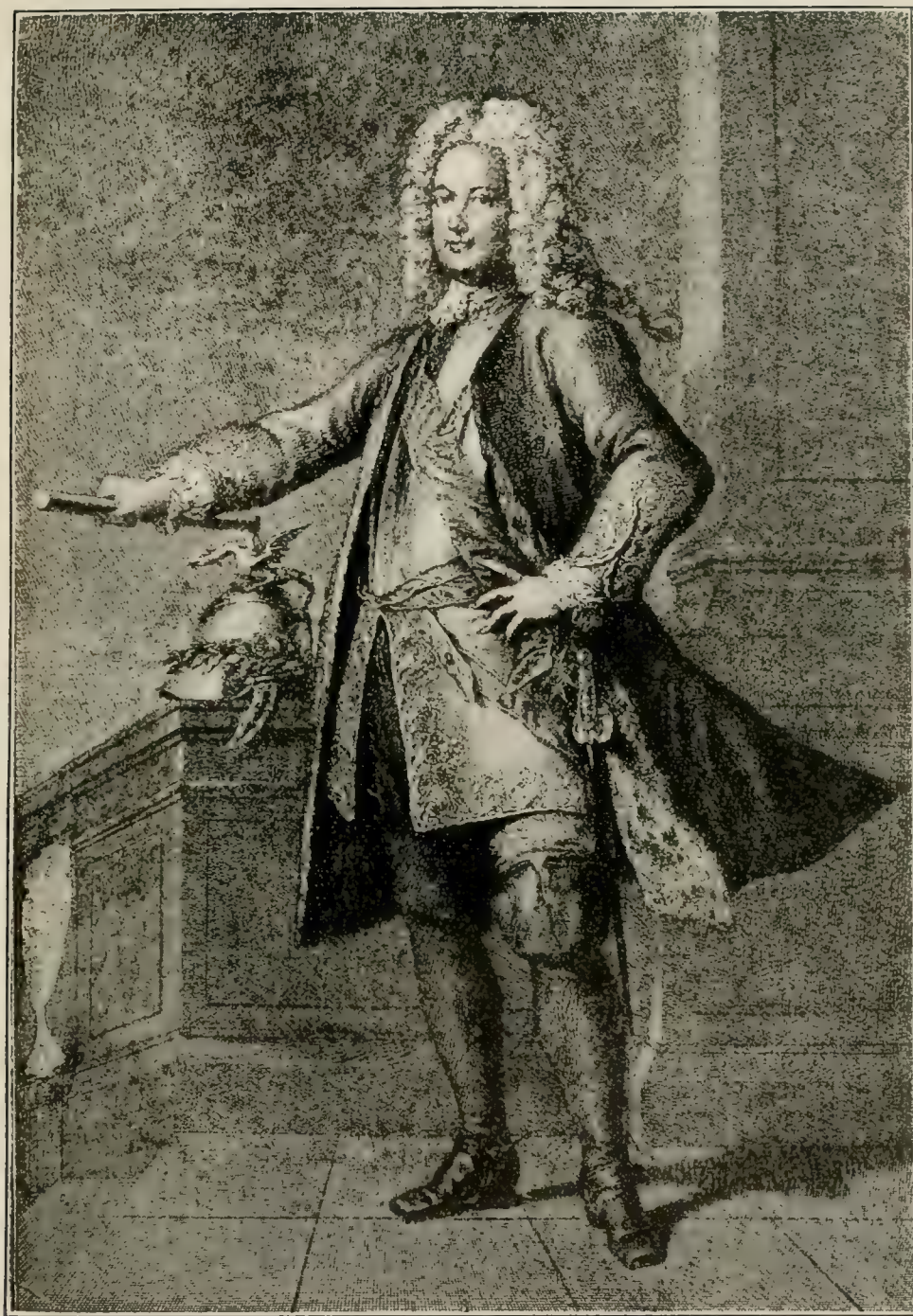
he has to do," wrote one of his generals. He seemed to consider war as a combat between champions, which could only be ended by the death or dethronement of the vanquished. He hesitated at no danger; he was as pitiless to himself as to his followers.

The faction opposed to the Saxon king welcomed the approach of Charles. When messengers came to Charles with proposals of peace, he answered: "I will make peace at Warsaw." He made good his word, and, although vigorously opposed by Augustus, he entered Warsaw practically unopposed on the 5th of May, 1702. Cracow likewise yielded to the Swedish arms. Augustus reassembled his troops and prepared for a final battle. "I will not go," said Charles, "till I have dethroned the King of Poland." Augustus fled to Saxony, taking with him, as a precaution, James and Constantine Sobieski. The throne being thus vacated, it only remained for Charles to place some one upon it. One son of the late Sobieski, Alexander, was still in the country, but he refused to accept the proffered crown. Others were neither so disinterested nor so timid, and one of these was a young man by the name of Stanislaus Leszczynski, who was palatine of Posen. He had been sent at the head of an embassy to Charles, and that monarch was so well pleased with the ambassador that he decided upon him for the Polish throne. The Diet in July, 1705,

formally decreed the abdication of Augustus, and on the 4th of October the new king was crowned.

Stanislaus was descended from an illustrious Polish family, and his father was one of the palatines. At this time he was only twenty-seven years of age. Perhaps his youth appealed to the Swedish king, for he himself was still younger. He had the polish of education and travel, and an agreeable personality, as well as a rather prepossessing appearance. There were other candidates, and the election Diet that was called was not entirely unanimous. Such a thing as this, however, did not affect Charles. Stanislaus Leszczynski was declared king of Poland, and the election duly registered. Charles sent an embassy to the new king, and also gave him some soldiers to maintain his new dignity.

Stanislaus was no sooner seated on the throne than Augustus marched against him with an army of twenty thousand Saxons. Peter also gave Augustus support, as the two had had a secret interview over the situation. Stanislaus barely escaped capture by his rival in the confused state of affairs. Again was Charles compelled to enter Poland, in order to make the throne of his protégé more stable. Charles and Stanislaus joined their forces at Lemberg. With characteristic energy Charles followed Augustus into Saxony, being determined to put an end to the matter for all time. He compelled Augustus to sign a humiliating treaty, and to write a



STANISLAUS LESZCZYNSKI.

letter of congratulation to Stanislaus upon his accession to the throne. An instance of the barbaric side of Charles is shown in his treatment of one of his enemies, Patkul, a nobleman of Courland, whom he compelled Augustus to surrender. After being kept a prisoner for a few months, he was broken on the wheel in the most horrible manner.

The troubles of Stanislaus did not end, however, even with the forced abdication of Augustus, for Peter the Great was not idle. The news that Augustus had been dethroned was not pleasing to Peter. Charles invaded Russian territory on the invitation of the Hetman of the Ukraine. This was his undoing. The final battle between these monarchs was fought at Poltava, with the result that Charles was defeated and fled to Turkey for protection. Augustus, upon hearing of the defeat of Charles, returned to Poland, and resumed the diadem. Turkey at first agreed to take up the cause of both Charles and Stanislaus, but the sultan changed his mind and the troops were not forthcoming. Stanislaus, not wishing to involve his country in bloodshed, agreed to abdicate. The consent of Charles was necessary to this, however, and he went secretly to Turkey to interview that monarch. Peter the Great sent Russian troops into Poland to sustain Augustus on the throne. The expected return of the Swedish monarch was a pretext for Augustus to retain the Saxon troops in Poland for several years. In the end, how-

ever, they were dismissed, and this made Augustus more popular. Stanislaus had reigned less than five years, but Poland certainly lost a good king. His subsequent life gives an indication of what he might have done for his unfortunate country. Poltava may have been a good thing for Russia, but it was a bad thing for Poland.

Religious differences caused considerable trouble about this time. The most serious conflict took place in the streets of Thorn. In a public procession some pupils, who were Lutherans, refused to kneel, the majority of the inhabitants of Thorn being Lutherans. An offending Jesuit was taken into custody. The Jesuits demanded his release, and upon this being refused attacked the citizens and more blood was shed. The citizens broke open the Jesuit college, plundered it, and profaned even an image of the Virgin. The Catholics of Poland, enraged at this action, retaliated with fanatical zeal. The magistrates were condemned to capital punishment for not averting the trouble, and seven citizens suffered a like fate. Three persons accused of throwing the Virgin image into the fire lost their right arms, and the whole city was deprived of its freedom of public worship. In 1715 a Protestant was condemned to have his tongue torn out, his right hand cut off, and his body burned because of some trifling criticisms of the Church, which were termed blasphemy. The persecuted Dissidents carried their complaints to

the Protestant princes of other lands. At this time, however, religious toleration had not gained much headway in any country of Europe, and the Catholics even in England were compelled to suffer for their faith. The protests of Protestant powers which poured in only served to increase the persecutions in Poland. The king himself was inclined to be liberal, but he had not the courage to attempt to curb the intolerance of the clergy. The Dissidents were finally proclaimed incapable of enjoying any office or dignity.

Augustus spent the latter part of his reign in an attempt to make the crown hereditary. He had not succeeded in this at the time of his death, on the 1st of January, 1733. He was a voluptuous monarch, and he left his country much worse than he found it. The province of Courland was practically lost to Poland, and was allowed to be ruled by Russia. He was a man of only ordinary ability, and even this was swallowed up in his vices. He had succeeded in dragging down with him many nobles, and the general standard of morals and honour was greatly lowered. The word worthless seems well applied to this man both in his private and public character.

Upon the death of Augustus, the Poles turned once more with longing eyes to their former king, Stanislaus, whose virtues had by this time become better known. He, at this time, was living in

France, upon a small pension which was very irregularly paid. Several attempts had been made upon his life, for which Augustus was generally blamed. The marriage of his daughter to the French king, Louis XV, placed behind him powerful influence. He hesitated to come, knowing the turbulence that would probably follow. He learned that the Russians, Germans and Austrians would all attempt to intercept him if he went to Poland. By this time Prussia had grown to be a formidable power through the ascendancy of the House of Brandenburg. To make the journey secure, a friend of his disguised himself as Stanislaus, and was ostentatiously put on board a steamer bound for Dantzic. In the meantime the real Stanislaus, in disguise, and accompanied by only one general, took the overland route through Germany. They travelled as merchants, and succeeded in eluding the vigilance of all the guards until they reached Warsaw almost on the eve of the election.

The unexpected arrival of Stanislaus stifled all opposition, and, on the 11th of September, he was elected king by the almost unanimous suffrages of sixty thousand nobles. Only thirteen dared oppose the popular will. But Russia was not to be so easily foiled, and her troops entered Polish territory. The Polish army numbered only a few thousands, but they kept the invading troops at bay for some time, while Stanislaus retreated to Dantzic



MARIA OF POLAND, WIFE OF LOUIS XV, KING OF FRANCE.

to await the promised French reinforcements. For several months this city defended itself, but the king decided to leave, since he was the sole object of the besiegers, and the French troops sent to his aid numbered only sixteen hundred men. He left Dantzic in the disguise of a peasant, and succeeded in getting safely beyond the enemy's lines by the aid of some friendly peasants. He was obliged to take shelter in a hut near the banks of the Vistula, where he could see the city walls crumbling before the artillery fire of the Russians. Unmanned at this, the king shed tears. He was constantly in danger of falling into the hands of Russian or Cossack troops. He arrived safely at a town on the Prussian frontier, where he was kindly received by Frederick I. From thence he proceeded leisurely to Lorraine.

In 1735 a treaty was signed at Vienna by which Stanislaus renounced the crown of Poland, but was given possession of his hereditary estates. He was also allowed to retain the title of king. His later years were devoted to literature and philosophy, and he was given the title of Stanislaus the Benevolent in the two duchies of Lorraine and Bar, over which he ruled. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-nine, and his death was the result of accidentally setting fire to his own clothes. He died on the 23rd of February, 1766, and was buried at Nancy.

The successor of Stanislaus on this occasion was

a son of the preceding Augustus, who took the title of Augustus III. If peace alone could have brought prosperity to Poland, it would have come during this reign. Augustus avoided the wars, and devoted himself solely to the amusements of society and hunting. His taste was luxurious, but, in contrast to his father, his own life was exemplary. He left the control of affairs to his prime minister, Count Brühl. Of Augustus, the Countess Krasinska says in her "Journal" (1759), which has been translated and published: "The king . . . is a kindly but rather weak character, and he has the greatest confidence in his minister Brühl, who in reality is the ruler of both Poland and Saxony. It is said affairs are going all wrong in Saxony, and not much better in our country. I have often heard people say: 'We need a Frederick the Great, with a strong hand and an iron will;' and as our king is old, they are all looking and planning already for his successor."

It is said that Augustus was always glad to have the *liberum veto* exercised, because it relieved him from the trouble of considering legislation. He was generally contriving to get one of the deputies to exercise this right. On one occasion no one would do this, so he took the trouble to search the law to find some way in which he could dissolve the Diet himself. He discovered that it was illegal to debate by candle-light. Accordingly he ordered his parti-



AUGUSTUS III.

sans to prolong the debate until night, and then called for candles. When these were brought and lighted, he informed them that this was a violation of the laws, and the Diet was at once dissolved.

The reign of Augustus lasted for thirty years. At the end of that time all business was stagnated, and public business was practically at an end because of the inactivity of the king. He had no sympathy with his Polish subjects, and did not even learn the language. During his last years there was considerable plotting for the throne, and it looked as though he would not be permitted to reign during his natural life. The Czartoryski were the most active, and it is supposed that they themselves had an eye to the throne. The Russians marched their troops across Polish territory without even so much as saying "by your leave," which shows how little fear her neighbours had of once-powerful Poland. The country was in an extremely wretched condition in every way, and kept growing rapidly worse. Augustus himself was ready to abandon the throne rather than fight for it. No active outbreak occurred, however, and Augustus passed away on the 5th of October, 1763, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, at Dresden, where he was buried. The setting of the stage for the last act in the history of the kingdom, or republic, of Poland was now begun by the neighbouring powers.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST PARTITION

Catherine the Great — Frederick the Great — Maria Theresa — The conspiracy and the conspirators — The division of the spoils — The Czartoryski — Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski — His liaison with Catherine — His election — Troubles begin early — Confederation of Bar — Abduction of Stanislaus — Pulaski.

First Conspirator: "When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or rain?"

Second Conspirator: "When the dismemberment's done,
When Poland's lost and won."

Third Conspirator: "That will be ere eighteen hundred and one."

First Conspirator: "Where the place?"

Second Conspirator: "Upon the plain."

All: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair,
Hover through the fog with diplomatic air."

THIS paraphrasing of the well known lines of the Bard of Avon might well be the prologue to the tragedy of Poland, in which the sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, and Austria bargained over the territory of that country like a merchant over a bale of goods. All of this was done with a religious solemnity, and in the name of the "invisible Trinity."

And yet each of these rulers had some good qualities. Catherine the Great was a student of the popular French philosophy of that period. For fifteen years she kept up a correspondence with Voltaire. She had considerable literary talent, writing both books and plays. At heart, and in her philosophi-



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Map of the Tigris River region, showing the course of the river and surrounding areas. The map is oriented with North at the top.

zing, Catherine seemed almost republican and essentially democratic. The Hermitage, now the famous art gallery of St. Petersburg, was built by her as a social retreat, and was connected with the Winter Palace. Here she invited the learned men and women of the day to meet. Whoever came was obliged to drop all rank as soon as he passed through the portal. The empress herself set the example. Each violation of the rule subjected that person to a fine.

But Catherine had another side to her character, which was of a more practical nature. She herself, a German princess, had usurped the Russian throne through a court conspiracy in 1762, in which her husband, Peter III, lost his life. Realizing the insecurity of her position, and knowing the deep attachment of the Russians to their religion, she was politic enough to pose publicly as the protector of the persecuted Orthodox believers in Poland. Her real worldly side shows in the question she asked when the matter was first presented to the empress.

“What advantage will accrue to Russia,” said Catherine, “if I take the part of the Greek Orthodox believers in Poland?”

“Rich territory and a large population,” was the answer.

Frederick the Great was likewise a philosopher. In Sans Souci Palace, at Potsdam, we are shown the rooms fitted out for Voltaire, and in which that philosopher resided many months. King and phi-

philosopher used to commune and discuss the greatest questions, from the brotherhood of men to the transmigration of the soul, for hours at a time. This is the side of Frederick's character that we see in that little jewel-box called Sans Souci. But the Polish question reveals another side, showing that the ideals of philosophy did not counterbalance the practical side of Frederick the politician. Frederick publicly espoused the cause of the Lutherans of Poland, but that was not the only moving cause in his mind.

"Do not talk to me of magnanimity," said Frederick, when argument was brought to bear upon him, "a prince can only study his interest."

Maria Theresa of Austria was busy with the affairs of her country, and the private concerns of her numerous family. It was no easy matter to arrange satisfactory marriages for her many sons and daughters among the princes and princesses of the day. But Austria had just lost Silesia to Prussia, and so she agreed to the national surgical operation with an audible sigh.

"So be it," said she, "as so many learned men desire it; but when I have been long dead, the consequences of this violation of all that until now has been deemed holy and just, will be experienced." Maria Theresa seemed to be the only one of the three conspirators who had any compunction of conscience, and her compunctions seem perfunctory



FREDERICK THE GREAT.

rather than sincere. It was like the robber who takes your purse, and then says, apologetically: "I beg your pardon." But he keeps your purse.

Maria Theresa took no actual part in the preliminary negotiations over Poland, but was represented by her son, Joseph II, who was at that time joint sovereign with her. The first interview between Frederick the Great and Joseph took place at Neiss, on the 25th of August, 1769. The map of Poland was placed before the two royal freebooters, and they marked out the portion of booty to be assigned to each of the three parties, for Catherine was kept advised of all that was going on. The Austrians seemed to have forgotten all that Sobieski and his followers did less than a century before, for they should have protected the honour of Poland even if the others did not. Furthermore, both Austria and Poland were Roman Catholic. But Austria wanted territory to make up for the loss of Silesia.

Each country has made an ingenious explanation of its own part in the affair. It is interesting to know how three states, naturally hostile to each other, forgot their mutual differences and jealousies, and attacked a country weaker than any one of the conspirators. Maria Theresa hated Catherine of Russia, and could only speak of her as "that woman." In the Seven Years War Austria and Prussia, as well as Russia and Prussia, were opposed to each other. But ambition and covetous-

ness make strange bedfellows. It is a matter of dispute which one first broached the project. Possibly, like Topsy, it just grew and never was born. The three may just naturally have been drawn together by a similarity of designs. Austria made the first actual seizure of territory in 1769, when she occupied the district of Zips, and for that reason Frederick tries to shift the odium on Austria. The intermediary between Catherine and Frederick was Prince Henry, the latter's brother, who went to St. Petersburg by invitation. Catherine would not treat with Vienna direct, but left that to her ally. The secret contract between these two was signed February 17th, 1772, and a few weeks later it was approved by Austria.

All of the three powers published defences of their action. But that of Frederick is short and characteristic of the man. "It is a general rule of policy," Frederick is credited with saying, "that, in default of unanswerable arguments, it is better to express one's self laconically and not go beating around the bush."

Each sovereign tried to prove that his country had legitimate claims to a part of Poland, and that the violent seizures were only a just resumption of sovereignty. Austria went back three hundred and sixty years to establish her pretensions. Russia had always laid claim to the greater part of Lithuania. Prussia's claims were based on the conquests of the

Teutonic Knights, and the strip of Polish territory which followed the Vistula River from Thorn to Dantzig separated the territory of the Brandenburg family into two parts. Frederick says: "We flatter ourselves that when the impartial public has weighed without prejudice all that has been done, they will not find anything which his majesty has done, which is not conformable to justice, to national right, and to the general use of nations. We trust also that the Polish nation will eventually recover its prejudice."

The late Count Von Moltke, in his excellent treatise on Poland, has given us the real gist of the matter. He says: "The position of Poland made it a stumbling-block to powerful neighbours, who had in the last centuries made immense progress, and whose rapid development was certain to bring about their own ruin or to annihilate all obstacles. Both Austria and Prussia were unanimous in their opinion, that they would prefer the anarchy of the republic, to assisting in turning a good neighbour into a powerful monarchy, which would be dangerous to all adjoining states."

It is certain that neither party consumed much time with their explanations. The troops of the allies began to pour into the coveted territory, each one occupying its portion, and each contributing a contingent to encompass Warsaw. The Diet was convoked on the 19th of April, 1773, and, by a ma-

jority of two votes, and under the pressure of foreign bayonets, ratified the plan presented for its own spoliation. It had been announced that every deputy who opposed the proposals should be treated as an enemy of the country and the three powers as well. Five patriots held the hall for a time, and the others held the session outside to agree to the terms. The Diet was nearly a month coming to the agreement, and commissioners were then formally appointed by the king. By this act Austria received an accession of twenty-seven thousand square miles, with a population of two million five hundred thousand; Russia received forty-two thousand square miles, and a population of one million five hundred thousand; the share of Prussia amounted to above thirteen thousand square miles, and nine hundred thousand souls. Prussia thus came off worst in the division of spoils, the other powers refusing at any price to permit her to occupy Dantzic, which was her greatest desire. These sovereigns had the audacity to say that this movement was "for the restoration of the prosperity of Poland."

What were the other powers of Europe doing at this time? England had a troublesome Parliament on hand, her American colonies were causing much trouble because of their stubbornness, and she was naturally favourably disposed toward Russia; France was exhausted by the lingering decay of her own government under Louis XV, her mistresses,



MARIA THERESA.

and fetes; Sweden and Denmark were both absorbed by affairs at home; and Spain was too remote to be interested.

Catherine was undoubtedly the arch-conspirator in the dismemberment of Poland. Upon the death of Augustus III, in 1763, this far-seeing empress practically forced one of her paramours, the handsome Stanislaus Poniatowski, upon the throne. "That event," says she, "was necessary to restore the Polish liberty to its ancient lustre, and to destroy foreign influence which was the continual source of trouble and contest." Prussia aided in this effort. "I and my ally, the Empress of Russia," is the way Frederick spoke of Catherine. "Poland must be left in her lethargy," he also said.

"Kings owe no account of their conduct save to God alone," was a favourite remark of Louis XV of France.

"It is just He whom I fear," said Maria Theresa, when pursued by remorse.

Let us study for a moment the personality and lineage of the last king of Poland.

The most influential family in Poland at this time, and generally spoken of as "The Family," was the Czartoryski. They had held princely rank for several centuries, and were of kin to the Jagiello. Judicious marriages had brought both wealth and influence. At this time two brothers, Adam and Augustus, were at the head of the family. Both

were men of character. Their home at Pulawy, in Volhynia, a large stone palace, was famous in Poland, and had been for three generations. A high level of culture and refinement prevailed at Pulawy, which was so marked a contrast to the dissolute habits of many of the nobles. It was a resort for scholars as well as politicians. A grandson of Augustus was named dictator in the Polish uprising of 1830. The museum established by this family in Cracow contains many literary and historical relics of Poland, which were collected together at Pulawy.

A cousin of these brothers, Adam and Augustus Czartoryski, was less of a scholar and more of a politician, and was ambitious to be the head of this family. It is his son, Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, who became the last king of Poland. He was born on January 17th, 1732, and was brought up very strictly by a pious mother. When he was born, some soothsayer predicted that this babe would one day wear a crown, and for that reason he was given the portentous name of "Stanislaus Augustus," the name of two former kings. His youth seems to have been characterized by modesty and simplicity. All accounts speak of the beauty of this king, and the time that he was accustomed to devote to his toilet. His chief amusements seem to have been the studying of the folds of his cravat, and the care of his curls, which he would not even sacrifice at his coronation, as had been the customary practice.

“ I should be content,” wrote Stanislaus in rather a remarkable self-dissertation before he became king, “ if I were an inch taller, and my feet were a trifle better shaped, and my nose were not so much hooked, and my mouth a little smaller. With these reservations, I believe that my face is noble and expressive, my figure not without distinction, and capable of attracting attention. . . . I don’t think I was born to please women. I am attracted to them by a general sympathy, but if I love, I love too passionately. . . . I am not pious, naturally — far from it; but I venture to affirm that I love God and surrender myself to His Will sincerely.”¹

A visit to St. Petersburg in 1755, whither Stanislaus went as secretary to the English ambassador, was his first real experience with the prevailing court life of that period; and the court of Russia was at that time probably the most corrupt court in Europe, excepting only that of Louis XV of France. The voluptuary Elizabeth was then on the throne. But there was a younger woman in court circles, then making an unenviable name for herself, who was known as the Grand Duchess Catherine, a niece by marriage of Elizabeth. At a ball she saw the handsome young Poniatowski, and was at once fascinated by his “ fine expressive eyes and pensive beauty.” For a while, because of either prudence

¹ This quotation, and some of the other extracts in this chapter, are from that interesting work by R. Nisbet Bain, “The Last King of Poland.”

or fear, he made no advances, but it was not long until he had supplanted all other favourites of this woman, who was destined to wield such a power in Europe a few years later. Their meetings were almost innumerable, and even Peter, Catherine's husband, learned of the *liaison*. "He was loving and beloved from 1755 to 1758," Catherine afterwards wrote in some intimate confessions, "and it would have lasted for ever, if he himself had not got bored. I don't think I ever cried so much in my life as I did during that last half-year." Catherine soon found consolation in other lovers, but she never lost a warm regard for Poniatowski.

The first political position held by the young Poniatowski was that of *Stolnik*, or High Steward, of Lithuania. This was bestowed upon him just shortly before his memorable visit to St. Petersburg. A little later he was accredited as ambassador to that court, but, because of his intrigue with Catherine, for whom he seems to have acted as a spy in the court of Elizabeth, he was sent back to Warsaw in disgrace. Thus the first political services of Poniatowski did not augur well either for his own or his country's future. He had simply made himself a part of the war of intrigue which waged around the court of the failing Elizabeth. His immorality shocked his more circumspect uncles.

When the throne of Poland became vacant, by the death of Augustus III, Catherine had already

usurped the crown of Russia. She and Frederick the Great were both opposed to continuing the House of Saxony, and decided upon a Pole for the throne. Poniatowski was their choice, although not that of the majority of the Polish nobility. The two brothers Czartoryski, the uncles of the young Poniatowski, were both popular, and either might have been chosen had there been no outside influence, but they were then men past middle life. They had prepared elaborate plans for the improvement of the political conditions of Poland, both by curbing the turbulent Diet and strengthening the executive. As all their efforts came to naught, these old men, who should have been wiser, made a personal appeal to Catherine, and upon their invitation, several thousand of Russian troops came to Warsaw, and some sixty thousand were massed on the frontiers; at the same time forty thousand Prussians were mobilized on the western frontier.

Von Moltke says: "In order to have sufficient funds in hand for the Diet, Catherine stopped all payments in the empire, even the pay of the soldiers. The Russian revenues, which were to buy the Polish deputies, were sent to Warsaw under a large military escort."

At a banquet given by Prince Augustus Czartoryski, in honour of the Diet that had been convened, the Prussian minister publicly invested Stanislaus Poniatowski with the Order of the Black Eagle, an

honour borne by no other Pole. Russia had already decorated him with the Order of St. Andrew. In this way the choice of these two sovereigns was made public.

When the Convocation Diet met on the 7th of May, 1764, Warsaw wore a strangely splendid aspect. "Beside the bayonet of the Russians and the carbines of the Prussians," says a writer, "appeared the bow and arrows of the Tartar. The crowded halls and banquets, the beauty of the women, the splendour of the assemblies, seemed to betoken a great national festival. . . . Every one was armed, and though as yet all was at peace, every one trembled lest an accident, a quarrel, might prove the spark which should cause a terrible explosion." The adherents of the Czartoryski family were distinguished by a cockade of the colours of the family, and they had brought with them two thousand of their own troops.

Some turbulent scenes immediately ensued. The deputy Mokranowski arose and protested "in the name of twenty-two senators and forty-five deputies" because "Russian troops have entered into the very midst of the assembly of the republic, and the representatives of our country wear the livery of a family" (the Czartoryski). This act legally dissolved the Diet, but technicalities did not stand in the presence of Russian troops. The old marshal, Malachowski, a man of four score years, re-

fused to open the Diet. "Gentlemen," said he, "since liberty no longer exists among us, I carry away this staff, and I will never raise it till the republic is delivered from her troubles. A free nation entrusted it to my care, a free nation alone can take it from me." Threats could not move him. "Strike, I shall die free, and in the cause of liberty," said the aged patriot.

Without a formal resignation of the marshal a successor was elected by eighty out of the three hundred members, most of the others having fled. Catherine was publicly thanked. Prince Adam Czartoryski was chosen marshal, which was really the position of president, and, by the direct suggestion of Repnin, the Russian ambassador, Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski was elected king of Poland. The candidacy of the young count was a surprise to the country at large. But with the power of Catherine behind him, the Czartoryski even were obliged to yield. It is said that Poniatowski was desirous of the honour, as he thought he could then aspire to the hand of the widowed Russian empress. Yet this seems never to have entered her mind. In August following, some thousands of electors, only a fraction of the usual eighty thousand, assembled on the field of election and recorded their votes, and there was not one dissident among them. It was so tranquil that many ladies were present, and mingled their acclamations

with those of the men. Eight thousand Russian soldiers judiciously distributed had something to do with this peaceable condition. The coronation took place on the 25th of November. For the first time this ceremony took place at Warsaw instead of Cracow; the vain king refused to sacrifice his curls and appear with his head cropped as had always been the custom.

“ I knew right well, what I ought to do,” Stanislaus wrote a friend, “ but the whole situation is terrible. Patience, caution, courage; and again patience, courage, caution! There you have my motto.”

Stanislaus is also reported to have said: “ I foresee that I shall have a difficult reign; I shall find only the thorns, while I leave to others the flowers. Perhaps, like Charles I of England, I shall suffer a long imprisonment.” A present of one hundred thousand ducats from Catherine, as a coronation gift, seemed to ease these gloomy presentiments of the future.

The new king, who took the title of Stanislaus II, undoubtedly ascended the throne with the best intentions. But no king ever assumed a crown under more perplexing circumstances. He had agreed to follow the counsel of his uncles, the Czartoryski. The first reform proposed was the abolishment of the *liberum veto*, which had been the cause of the anarchy that had prevailed. A single deputy could “ ex-



STANISLAUS II.

plode " the Diet and annul all previous resolutions, even though they had been passed unanimously. But this change could not be made without the consent of Russia. The empress refused this on the ground that it would not be fair to the Dissidents, most of whom were members of the Orthodox Church. Catherine's hold on her own throne was not very secure, as she was a foreigner, and the method of her usurpation did not meet with entire approval, so she thought in this way to popularize herself as a defender of Orthodoxy. Stanislaus was informed that Russia would not permit the reform until all the non-Catholics were placed on a footing of equality with the Catholics. This the Diet would not agree to. The reform was attempted without this provision. The Russian and Prussian ministers protested at once. Then Stanislaus himself began to waver, and the *liberum veto* was restored. Soltyk, Bishop of Cracow, by his fiery eloquence had stirred up anew religious bigotry, by starting the cry that the faith was in danger. The beginning of the end was already visible, for the opening wedge had been introduced. Catherine's opportunity had come, and this astute ruler was shrewd enough not to let it pass by.

From the very beginning Stanislaus was but a viceroy of Russia. Sequence shows that Catherine knew her man when she described Stanislaus to Frederick as " the individual best suited to our pur-

poses.” He was not formed of the clay of which heroes are made. What he called prudence and common sense, the line of least resistance which offered something to him, was his policy. So long as he could save something for himself from the wreckage, he was content. The Russian ambassador, the brilliant Repnin, openly boasted that it was “he who had put the crown on his head,” and he did not hesitate to remind the king of that fact. He even overruled elections to the Diet, and made new members sign a pledge agreeing to follow the dictates of himself as representative of Catherine. The Bishop of Cracow was summarily arrested. One priest, by the name of Podoski, was sent around to stir up dissatisfaction among the nobles, and this was not a difficult undertaking. Repnin practically had the control of all offices at the disposal of the king. But he stood far above the debased nobles around him, who freely accepted his bribes, for he himself was absolutely true to his sovereign, even when called upon to do things of which he did not approve.

Had Stanislaus been firm to his promise to follow the lead of his uncles, had he followed their proposed reforms with his whole heart, there is no telling what the result might have been for Poland. Surely Catherine would not have dared to arrest and carry off the sovereign himself, as her representatives did the Bishop, and on more than one occasion did the deputies. Had she done so, a wave

of righteous indignation might have gone up from the other nations, which would have prevented the partitioning of Polish territory that followed.

Eight nobles opposed to the condition of affairs met at the little town of Bar, in Podolia, and formed a confederation, which took its name from that town, in 1768. They organized an army and issued a manifesto protesting against the Russian yoke. Catherine declared the confederates rebels and enemies, and sent her troops against them. They were defeated, but it was really due to their efforts and intrigues that a war resulted between Russia and Turkey. The hardships endured by this band of patriots were indeed many and grievous. The troops were almost naked, badly fed, and poorly armed.

The king himself had many trying experiences. One of the strangest was the attempt to kidnap him. A conspiracy had been formed of about forty of the leading nobles, and an attempt was made to carry out this bold move on the 3rd of November, 1771. The conspirators took an oath to deliver the king alive to Casimir Pulaski, or Pulawski, and, if this could not be done, to put him to death. The latter was undoubtedly only a last resort. "Twenty times," said Strawinski, who was afterwards executed, "I could have killed him in Warsaw, and I abstained from it." They entered Warsaw disguised as peasants, and stationed themselves along

the Street of the Capuchins, where the king was expected to pass on his return to the palace after a visit with his uncle. As he was returning, between nine and ten o'clock, the conspirators attacked the guards and seized the king. One cut him across the face with a sabre. They put him on horseback, and dragged him along at full gallop. It was a very dark night, and the three bands of conspirators became separated. In jumping a ditch the king's horse broke a leg, and all then went on foot. Some had gone ahead to notify the others of their success. Although those having charge of Stanislaus wandered about for hours, they had not got far away from Warsaw. In the meantime the palace guards were on the trail. At one place they found a bloody coat, at another a shoe, from which they concluded that the king was dead. One by one the conspirators had fled or got separated from the king, except Kosinski.

The king used his eloquence on Kosinski as they halted for a rest, for both were weary, and begged the conspirator to let him escape.

"But," said Kosinski, "I have sworn to my chief, General Pulaski, to bring you to Czechstochowa, and I can not break my oath."

"Did you not," retorted the king, "seven years ago, also swear an oath of allegiance to me?"

"By Heaven! your majesty, I had clean forgotten all about it," replied his simple subject. "If

I should consent and re-conduct you to Warsaw, I shall be taken and executed.”

“ I give you my word,” said the king, “ that you shall suffer no harm; but if you doubt my promise, escape while there is yet time. I can find my way to some place of safety, and I will certainly direct your pursuers to take the contrary road to that which you have chosen.”

Kosinski was immediately at the feet of his sovereign, begging his pardon, and swore to protect him against his enemies. They took refuge in the old mill of Mariemont, near by. The miller was loth to admit the men, fearing that they were robbers. He did not know that one of the men seeking admittance was the king. A messenger was immediately dispatched to Warsaw, and a small troop was sent after the monarch. When the guard arrived the king was sleeping, and Kosinski was on guard with drawn sword. At five o'clock on the following morning Stanislaus arrived at the palace, bedraggled, dishevelled and a little bloody, but otherwise none the worse for his experience. Great was the rejoicing of the people when they found him unhurt, but many wept to see him in such a plight and only half clothed.¹

¹ Casimir Pulaski, the real head of the conspiracy, son of the man who headed the Confederation of Bar, afterwards fled to America. He joined the Revolutionary Army, and greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Savannah in 1779, and died in that engagement. In 1904 Congress appropriated the sum of \$50,000 to erect an equestrian statue of this hero in the city of Washington.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SECOND PARTITION

Abandon of capital — Polish women — Russian influence — Insults to Stanislaus — Period of progress — The rebellious triumvirate — Four Years' Diet — Blindness to real conditions — New constitution — Prussian influence — Felix Potocki — Russia declares war — Joseph Poniatowski — The Dumb Diet.

POLAND emerged from the first partition in 1772 humiliated in her own eyes, and at the mercy of Russia. And yet we are told that never was Warsaw gayer or more vivacious than just at this time. At the very moment that the territories of the "republic" were being torn to pieces, the capital had abandoned itself to gaiety. Every pretext was seized upon to promote new festivities. "On with dance! Let joy be unconfined!" seemed to be the slogan, and Russian officers were most popular. Stanislaus himself was occupied with his mistresses. A marriage which he attempted to make with an Austrian princess was thwarted by Catherine, and he remained unmarried, except for a morganatic alliance with the Pani Grabowska, one of the best of his many favourites. His conduct shocked his uncles, and the purse-strings were tightened. The treasurer did not pay him regularly. Hence he was always in debt, and Catherine's purse was plethoric.

Women who were wives or mistresses, and some who were both, had great influence. As the men grew decadent, the women seemed more virile. The few women who came into prominence in the earlier history of Poland were noble women, but in the time of Stanislaus they were different. Divorce was almost as rampant among the court ladies as it is to-day. The church dignitaries, many of them, were simply worldly prelates. They were as gay and maintained elaborate courts on as great a scale as those without the cloisters. The Bishop of Cracow had his own troupe of actors, and had equipped a small but sumptuous theatre of his own. The best prelate of all was the king's own brother, Michael Poniatowski, who had become Primate. Upon the dissolution of the Jesuit order, which had more than one hundred houses in Poland, the other prelates fell upon this wealth "like wolves upon their prey," so we are told.

A more sensitive man than Stanislaus would either have died from humiliation or abdicated. His position was secure, but he had to pocket many insults. The new Russian ambassador, Stachelberg, took advantage of many an opportunity to humiliate him. But the insolence of his own subjects was even worse. On one occasion a noble said to his face: "It is all very well for your majesty to keep a stiff upper lip, for you are safe upon the throne. Your majesty runs no risk of injury to honour, wealth

or children, because you have none of these things already." But his finances were improved, as certain crown lands were set off for his exclusive use, and their revenue enabled him to maintain a court. But no amount of money sufficed for the improvident Polish monarch. He was not only extravagant in his personal habits, but extremely generous, and he especially favoured poor literary men who crowded around him. Then every Diet cost him money, for he was obliged to buy some members in order to get what he wanted. His one redeeming trait was a charming personality, and he especially shone in the boudoir.

Nevertheless there followed a decade and a half of real attempts at improvement after the first partition. The majority of the nobles began to see the necessity of radical reform, and they struggled manfully against mighty obstacles. But Frederick II imposed almost prohibitive tolls on the Vistula and Wartha, and the loss of the great salt mines of Wieliczka caused a serious loss in revenue. Agriculture was at a low ebb. The loss of revenue placed the royal treasury in a serious condition.

Stanislaus honestly endeavoured to meet this condition of affairs. The Czartoryski led in the work of reform, and the brothers were aided by Ignatius Potocki. Heretofore Poland had been almost exclusively an agricultural country. The nobles were in possession of such vast tracts of land that they

made no effort to cultivate it carefully, and no tax had to be paid on land. But the partition shrunk their holdings, exports decreased, and new conditions arose. An act was passed to the effect that nobles who engaged in trade did not forfeit their nobility, as had heretofore been the case. They were also made subject to taxation. Manufactures were started in a number of places. Among these were a cannon factory, and a number of iron works. A mint was established. The better development of communications was begun, and several important canals constructed. All of the efforts of individuals to develop trade and industry were warmly encouraged by the king.

Education was encouraged. In fact a real era of literature and intellectual development began. Every Pole began the study of the history of his own country. The School of Cadets was established in Warsaw, which afterwards turned out those brilliant officers who aided Napoleon so much, and it was here that Kosciuszko first learned the art of war. A school of medicine was founded in the same city. The suppression of the Jesuit orders had given an ample educational fund. Some of the nobles freed their serfs. The towns were admitted to the elective franchise. A few corrupt officials were actually punished for their crimes, a thing almost forgotten in Polish annals. A Permanent Committee of eighteen senators and eighteen deputies,

elected biennially by ballot, had been imposed upon Poland after the first partition to work with the king in the effort to rehabilitate the downtrodden country. It was undoubtedly an improvement over anything the Poles themselves had ever devised. The committee was divided into different departments, and the king was to preside over the Council, summon the Diet with its consent, and select all senators, ministers and bishops from lists submitted to him. In 1782 the treasury actually showed a credit balance, almost the first time in Polish history. And all this was done with the heavy burden of an army of occupation upon the country.

As usual, however, there was an opposition party, and, under the Polish custom, an energetic few could almost undo the work of a majority. The chiefs were the triumvirate of Felix Potocki, Francis Branicki, and Severin Rzewuski. The latter owed all he had to Stanislaus. Potocki had inherited a domain of three million acres in the Ukraine, and his magnificent establishment at Tulczin was called his "capital." But these three were a continual thorn in the side of the king. They may not consciously have been traitors, since the excessive idea of the importance of a noble had been bred in them for many generations. Potocki has been described as the *liberum veto* personified. These three men began to plot against Stanislaus soon after the first partition, claiming that he was aiming at absolu-

tism. They continually intrigued with the court at St. Petersburg, and waged war against him in the Permanent Committee. For a number of years, Stanislaus was able to circumvent all their wiles and treachery. At this period in Poland's history Stanislaus really deserves pity. Anything he did or proposed aroused opposition, simply from the fact that he was king. He had considerable tact and infinite patience, but his weaknesses were improvidence and irregular living. When in debt he had to borrow of the Russian representatives, and then he was helpless in their hands. He strongly desired that the throne should be made hereditary, and that the king under certain circumstances should have a veto upon legislation.

One Diet sat for several years, — from 1788 to 1792, — and is known in history as the Four Years' Diet. It is sometimes called the Great Diet. It was indeed great in oratory, but almost equally great in its imbecility. This Diet was technically converted into a confederation, which enabled a majority of votes to control instead of a unanimity. If enthusiasm alone could have saved Poland, the country would have been preserved. But there was no self-discipline. The idea of individual liberty, a liberty which shut its ears and eyes to all external authority, still prevailed. Family factions early arose. The Diet was at length decreed perpetual. As an insult to Russia, the Permanent Committee

was abolished. This practically left the sovereign power in its own hands. The king was reduced to a mere automaton, and yet he had to sit through the interminable debates; only now and then did he venture to express a warning word. It practically had no standing rules for a long time, so that the utmost confusion prevailed. Each deputy orated and perorated to his heart's content.

Class prejudice, public parsimony, intolerance of discipline, excessive individuality, — all these elements contributed to the turbulence of the Diet, and these were the real national evils. Ladies attended the sessions and applauded the speakers, especially any harangue against Russia, for it was at this time that the Prussian party was in the ascendancy. It was Napoleon who afterwards said that in Poland the men signified nothing, and the women everything. An army of one hundred thousand was decreed, which would have been about one-tenth of the men available for military service, but the nobles were unwilling to make the sacrifice of money involved. To avoid a tax and save their pride, “a voluntary and perpetual sacrifice” was agreed to by the nobles. But few made good their promises, and the needed army was not provided for. The king himself even threw in his diamond-studded decorations. All of these things affected credit abroad, and foreign bankers began to refuse credit.

Wise counsel said, “Keep quiet and await the

death of Catherine," which could not be long, but no! insult after insult was heaped upon Russia. Every one favourable for an alliance with Russia was a "parasite;" all others were "patriots." The members did not stop to consider whether they were strong enough to thus openly attack Russia. When Russia courteously asked permission to march troops through Polish territory in her campaign against the Turks, it was granted with the condition that they should go in companies of not more than five hundred marching at long intervals. This really angered Catherine. The death of Frederick the Great in 1786 seemed to augur well, as Russia and Prussia were alienated by that event.

Poland actually seemed to have started on a new lease of life at the beginning of the last decade of the eighteenth century. A new constitution had been prepared, passed by the Diet, and signed by Stanislaus. This was only accomplished by clever manipulations on the part of the leaders. The 5th of May, 1791, was set for the day of action; but the news spread abroad, and it was forced through two days earlier. One impetuous Pole, Pan Suchorzewski, cast from him a decoration given him by the king, and thrèw himself before the throne. "Put me in chains if you like," he said, "but speak I will!" He was almost trampled to death by the other deputies as they crowded around the throne

in their enthusiasm. Such theatrical actions were not uncommon in the history of the Polish assemblies.

Stanislaus took the oath to the new constitution from the Bishop of Cracow, and he said with emotion: "I have sworn, and I will never swerve from it. I call on those who love their country to follow me to the church and take the same oath." Cries of "Long live the King! Long live the Constitution!" greeted this act. A small minority — only eighteen — refused to sign it, and prepared a remonstrance. The majority felt that the time had come for actual reform. This constitution was established May 3rd, 1791. It provided for a limited monarchy of a modern type, with the Elector of Saxony, son of Augustus III, as hereditary monarch. The burghers were to be given representation on the same basis as the nobles. Vague promises were made to the peasants. It was declared that any one upon setting foot in Poland became immediately free. A regular system of courts was provided for. On that day thousands of spectators thronged the royal castle of Warsaw to witness this splendid spectacle of a nation throwing off its shackles. When pressure was brought from the outside, the vacillating Stanislaus annulled the new constitution. National anarchy followed, and the Poles were soon fighting among themselves as well as defending themselves against alien foes.

At this period, as there had been for some time previously, there were two parties — one insisting on an alliance for protection with Prussia, and another with Russia. For seventy years there had been no regular war, and the ancient warlike spirit had grown dim. A real war at this time might have checked national decadence. Their contentious spirit was all devoted to high-sounding oratory. Poland had become a nation of pettifoggers. In one session of sixteen continuous hours, during which the king never left the throne, eighty orations were delivered. The most trivial incident would bring out elaborate oratory.

Stanislaus and his court made a visit to Catherine in 1787, during her memorable journey to the Black Sea, and had come back highly elated with his success. Although nothing was promised by that astute woman, he felt greatly encouraged over the attitude of the empress. He himself favoured an alliance with Russia, and perhaps he was wise in that. Had Poland been able to make herself strong enough that her aid might be valuable, then she could have been an ally to be sought by the court of St. Petersburg. The Poles had more in common with Russians than Germans. But Poland was too weak to claim equal conditions, and the pride of the Polish nobles would not listen to anything else. It must be remembered that Poland was really a loose confederation of nobles, whose only recognized obliga-

tion to the state had heretofore been military service.

A time finally came when the Prussian party prevailed, and this was the beginning of the end. Prussia actually promised an offensive and defensive alliance in 1790. Credulity seems to have been one of the weaknesses of Poland. They now relied upon the promises of Frederick William. No sooner had the alliance been concluded, in March, 1790, than the Prussian king began to hint that he desired Thorn and Dantzig. He wanted something in return for his support, a natural want. Had Stanislaus and his advisers shown less vacillation the end might have been different. Everywhere a stone-blind ignorance of the gravity of the situation seemed to prevail. Not a single step was taken toward mobilizing an army and placing the country in a state of defence.

At the time of the excessive enthusiasm in Warsaw over the new constitution, Catherine was still occupied with the Turkish War. No indication of dissatisfaction came from St. Petersburg, for Catherine was watching her prey, patiently and silently, until it was absolutely within her reach. The opportunity came quickly. Felix Potocki, dissatisfied with the Prussian party, had gone to Italy. A command came from the Polish government that he return within three months and take the oath of allegiance to the new constitution, or be declared



CATHERINE THE GREAT

an outlaw. Casting all his scruples to the wind, he decided to appeal to Catherine. This was the pretext that she awaited. Potocki gathered together a few confederates who met at the little town of Targowice, and formed a confederation. This confederation issued a proclamation demanding the dissolution of the Diet, the abolishing of the new constitution, and the complete restoration of the old. It is said that there were only ten nobles besides the three conspirators heretofore mentioned. "Our order," says Potocki, "is the basis of the republic; nay, it is the very republic itself." These confederates, accompanied by a Russian army, started for Warsaw. Proclamations were issued at almost every step to the inhabitants of the towns and villages. Through the Ukraine their march was in the nature of a triumphal procession.

It was just at this time that preparations were being made in Warsaw for the celebration of the first anniversary of the new constitution. News of the conspiracy created a great commotion. Word came from King Frederick William that he could not be counted on for support. A formal declaration of war by Russia was brought by a messenger. The Diet, at last brought to its senses, declared the king dictator. He appointed his nephew, Prince Joseph Poniatowski, commander in chief of an army which scarcely existed. He was practically ordered to create something out of nothing. With the few

troops that he could gather he advanced against the enemy. He had few officers of any great ability to aid him; but there was one notable exception, and that was Kosciuszko. These two men, so dissimilar in tastes and so unequal in birth, proved to be good working comrades. At this time Kosciuszko was in the inferior capacity, but later the prince served under him. Jealousy of each other seems never to have entered into these two patriotic spirits.

The Polish army assumed only the defensive. The first engagement took place at Zielence, in which the Russians were forced to retreat with a loss of some thousands of men. Had Poniatowski followed up his victory, some Polish writers think that the result might have been different. But he, knowing his lack of resources, and fearful of the moral results of a possible defeat, did not follow up his advantage. The glad tidings of Zielence caused great rejoicing at Warsaw. But the treachery of a general in command of the northern army, and the news that the Russians had occupied Vilna, dampened their enthusiasm. Information of Joseph Poniatowski's retreat followed soon after, a move which he was compelled to take because of a lack of powder and provisions for his troops. He retreated to the banks of the Bug River. Here occurred the battle of Dubienka, where, after an engagement of several hours, the Poles were compelled to retire, which they did, however, in regular order, to Krasny



PRINCE JOSEPH PONIATOWSKI.

Starow. Here, while Poniatowski was preparing for a decisive battle, the news reached him that Stanislaus had acceded to the demands of the confederation and abrogated the new constitution.

It is probably true that the dictatorship had been placed in the king's hands too late; nevertheless, at the critical moment, the people had placed their destinies in his hands, and he failed them by an ignominious surrender. As the head of the army, the king at first displayed considerable activity. It is even said that he at one time seriously considered sacrificing his gray locks, of which he was so proud, in order to look more like a soldier. He used to review the soldiers in front of the palace and make beautiful speeches to them, haranguing them on their duty to their country. He would then administer patriotic oaths, which they took with tears of enthusiasm. This was in May; by the middle of June his courage had ebbed considerably. On June 22nd, he made a direct appeal to Catherine for an armistice. He declared, so we are told, with tears in his eyes, that he would abdicate rather than surrender the new constitution. A little later we find him asking the Russian ambassador: "What then do you advise me to do?" "I advise you," replied the ambassador, "to trust implicitly in the magnanimity of Her Imperial Majesty." This Stanislaus did. When the matter was presented for a vote to the Council of State it was defeated. The king,

however, as dictator, which gave him authority to override the decisions of this Council, acceded to the demands of the Russian empress.

Unknown to Poland the second partition had been arranged between Catherine and Frederick William of Prussia on the 23rd of January, 1793. Stanislaus claimed Catherine had agreed to respect Poland's integrity. All the negotiations between the two parties, who took part in the second partition, were clothed in the closest secrecy. As early as 1791 negotiations had been carried on between these two countries and Austria. The Russian ambassador gave magnificent entertainments for the king and Polish nobles. Felix Potocki entered Warsaw in triumph and swelled with pride, for he hated Stanislaus. He saw his mistake too late, and then issued an appeal for an uprising against a new partition. His feeling of victory and elation lasted less than three months. Prince Poniatowski fled to Vienna, and refused to submit even when his estates were confiscated.

Catherine decided that the new partition should be consented to by the Poles themselves. Stanislaus was practically ordered by Catherine to come to Grodno to summon a Diet, the place fixed by her for the setting of the second act of the tragedy; but he was kept in ignorance of the real reason. Stanislaus refused to go, alleging ill health, old age, bad roads, poverty, etc., but the Russian ambassador

denied another partition was planned. Not until the ambassador assured him that Catherine would pay his debts, then amounting to an enormous sum, did the unfortunate king agree to go. This bribe he could not resist. He arrived there April 23, 1793. There, on the second anniversary of the glorious constitution of 1791, he affixed his signature to the call for an extraordinary Diet. He burst into tears, so it is said, as he signed the manifesto. During his stay there the old king was dependent upon a nominal sum of three thousand ducats doled out each week by Sievers, the Russian ambassador, "upon his good behaviour." Grodno now became the scene of great social activity. Adventurers and adventuresses flocked there by the hundred. A whirlpool of reckless gaiety followed, with balls and banquets galore. Nine-tenths of the Polish deputies were housed and paid a regular allowance by the Russian ambassador. It was his policy to make everything pleasant, and sugar-coat the bitter pill as much as possible.

To ensure a majority in this Diet, the Commission issued a temporary law that none of those who had concurred in the establishment of the new constitution should be eligible, and even those who had protested against any of the decisions of the commissioners were placed under the ban. This fatal Diet was opened on the 17th of June, after the usual mass and sermon. The king in an address from the

throne, which had been erected for him, expressed his fears for the fate of his country, and recommended negotiations as the only hope. Even the Diet which had been so artfully picked was not at first very tractable. A spirit worthy of better days was displayed. Many indeed were the fiery speeches made. "They threaten us with Siberia," said one of the deputies; "those deserts will not be without charms for us; everything there will recall the cause of our country to our minds."

The king was somewhat alarmed at the outbursts of patriotism, and exhorted the Diet to comply with the demands made. The deputies agreed to treat with Russia, but they refused to consider Prussia in the deal, because of the bitter resentment at what they considered her ignoble desertion. Against that country they stood as a solid phalanx. Catherine had gone too far to go back on her ally. The Russian minister sent a number of urgent orders to the Diet for an immediate ratification of the treaty, but twenty days passed without his being able to extract the word of assent from the defenceless assembly. Seduction, intimidation, and violence were alike employed, but even the support of bribed deputies proved unavailing. Sievers finally announced that he would order two battalions of grenadiers with four pieces of artillery to surround the castle. The gunners stood beside their guns with lights in their hands. The deputies had to enter the hall be-

tween a file of soldiers with weapons crossed. They were informed that they could talk, but would not be allowed to leave their seats until the resolution had been agreed to.

The crisis came on the night of September 22nd, when four members, who had distinguished themselves by their patriotism, were dragged from their homes by Russian soldiers, and removed from Grodno. When the Diet met the following morning, protest was made at this action. The house decided that no business would be transacted until the members were released. The ambassador informed them that if his demands were not complied with the soldiers knew what to do. The Diet refused even to have the protocol read. The ambassador said they could not leave the castle, and that bundles of straw would be brought in for them to sleep upon. This announcement was received with silence. Hour after hour the silence continued. The king sat upon his throne, and the deputies, gloomy and silent, sat or reclined upon the benches. At three o'clock on the morning of the 24th, the Russian general started for the door as if to introduce his grenadiers. At length a timid deputy proposed that silence should be considered as a consent to the motion, and accordingly the question whether the treaty should be signed without reservation or not was put by the marshal. This was repeated three times without an answer. "I take it then," said

the marshal, "that it is agreed to unanimously, for silence gives consent." He then declared that it had received the sanction of the Diet. The deputies left the hall in profound grief and with streaming eyes.

The treaty consenting to a further loss of territory was signed on the 5th of October. Stanislaus then dissolved the Dumb Diet. The second partition was made between Russia and Prussia, the latter receiving a little more than one-quarter as much as the former. The rest of Poland, a miserable remnant, was given to Stanislaus to be governed by the old laws.

CHAPTER IX

KOSCIUSZKO: AN INTERNATIONAL HERO

Youth of Kosciuszko — Disappointment in love — Enlists under Washington — Returns to Poland — Declared dictator — His oath — Raclawice — Defeated by Suvarov — Third Partition — Death of Stanislaus — Kosciuszko revisits America — His will — Correspondence with Alexander I — Death.

FOLLOWING the second partition of Poland there ensues a short period of national history which centres around the personality of one man — Andrew Thaddeus Bonaventura Kosciuszko (pronounced Ko-schûs-ko). This man, who is honoured wherever liberty is cherished, was born in the chateau of Sienniewicza, in Lithuania, on the 12th of February, 1746. His father was one of the *szlachta*, or landed gentry, but not of a prominent family.

The youthful Tadeusz, as it is written in Polish, was taken under the wing of the Czartoryski family, and given a good military training. He was first sent to the military academy in Warsaw, and from 1769 to 1774 he completed his military education in Germany, Italy and France — and especially in the military school of Versailles, near Paris. Here this Polish youth, at the impressionable age of early manhood, imbibed the liberal republican ideas so

prevalent in the France of that day, and which later developed into the French Revolution. He is said to have been a hard and apt student in school, and made a most favourable impression upon his instructors.

When Kosciuszko returned to his own country in 1774, he found his fatherland in despair, and shorn of all her elements of greatness. The Diet had been compelled to submit to a humiliating surrender of a large part of the national domains. The country was governed by a weak king; it was tyrannized over by a corrupt and effeminate aristocracy, which had more pride than good sense. Kosciuszko volunteered his services to his country, and was made a captain of artillery. Here, as in many other instances, a Polish woman helped to make history. Kosciuszko fell in love with the daughter of a noble, the Panna Ludwika Sosnowska, a clever and beautiful young woman, if reports are to be believed. He did this, too, while he was tutoring her in some studies. This was a terrible thing in old Poland, for a penniless soldier to aspire to the hand of a daughter of one of the oldest families. Such an alliance could not be considered for a moment. The father packed the young lady off to parts unknown, thus nipping the romance in the bud. She afterwards married a Polish nobleman, and we have no further interest in her history. Kosciuszko remained true to his first love, and never married.



ANDREW THADDEUS BONAVENTURA KOSCIUSZKO.

This incident, bitter as it was to the young lover, meant much to the New World. It was disappointment in love that brought Kosciuszko to the shores of America. Distance alone seemed to promise forgetfulness. He fled to Paris, hoping to enlist in the army there, but there seemed no hope of military glory in France just then. It was in Paris that he met Benjamin Franklin, envoy to France from the colonies, and heard of their struggle with England for liberty. He sailed for America in 1776, carrying with him a letter of introduction from Franklin to Washington.

As soon as Kosciuszko reached the colonies he proceeded to the headquarters of Washington. The interview between the two men is reported as follows:

“What do you seek here?” Washington asked of the young Pole.

“I come to fight as a volunteer for American independence,” Kosciuszko answered.

“What can you do?” said Washington.

“Try me,” was the laconic reply.

Washington did try Kosciuszko, and he found him worthy of his confidence. It was on the 18th of October, 1776, that he entered the official family of the revolutionary commander as colonel of engineers. For eight years his name is a part of our national history. His fame ranks along with that of Lafayette and DeKalb. Kosciuszko really taught

the Colonials the science of fortifications. He planned the fortified camp of General Bates at Bemis's Heights in 1777. He was the principal engineer in the construction of West Point, where a monument of white marble was erected in his honour in 1828. When the Society of the Cincinnati was organized, Kosciuszko was made a member. Congress bestowed upon him the rank of brigadier-general.

After the close of the Revolutionary War Kosciuszko returned to his fatherland. Great as his reputation was in this country, communication was so poor with the outside world that only fragmentary accounts of it had reached Poland, although little by little it began to infiltrate. One reported incident is the remark of Stanislaus when he saw the inscription "*omnia relinquit servare rempublicam*" on the insignia of the Cincinnati order. "Methinks," said the king, "this inscription savours somewhat of fanaticism." He hinted that there might be equally important duties nearer home as fighting for an alien people in an unknown land.

For a few years after his return Kosciuszko lived in comparative retirement on his estate. In 1789, however, he was appointed general of a brigade. Experienced officers were very much needed in the Polish army at this time, which the government was endeavouring to rehabilitate. A little later he re-

signed, being thoroughly dissatisfied with the conditions, and left the country along with many other Polish officers. But he came back and served with distinction under Prince Joseph Poniatowski, as mentioned in the preceding chapter. It was after the second partition that the most dramatic event in the life of Kosciuszko, and one of the most spectacular in the history of Poland, occurred.

It is not surprising that the Poles were dissatisfied and the loyal patriots almost desperate after the second partition. The old wound had not yet healed, and it was opened afresh. Russia immediately ordered the reduction of the Polish army, which still numbered twenty-five thousand men. This order precipitated the explosion. Arrests of patriots were made almost daily. A conspiracy at once arose in Warsaw, although many of the leaders of the patriots had already fled to Dresden and Leipzig. Among these was Kosciuszko. One leader refused to disband his troops, and set out for Cracow with his force of about seven hundred cavalry. At his approach the inhabitants of this ancient capital rose and expelled the Russian garrison. Five thousand scythes were made and distributed among the peasants for weapons. In the meantime the patriots had sent two emissaries to Kosciuszko at Leipzig, where he was living, and offered the command to him. With the cautiousness characteristic of him he sent friends to Warsaw to find out the

real state of public feeling. He advanced to the borders of Galicia, where he awaited their reports.

On the 23rd of March, 1794, Kosciuszko entered Cracow, and on the following day he was proclaimed generalissimo. He was given absolute power in command of the armies, and in the regulation of all affairs, political and civil. A deed of insurrection was drawn up, and Kosciuszko was appointed dictator. Seldom indeed has such unqualified confidence been placed in a single individual. His first act was to summon all the nobles and citizens, to impose a property tax, and make all the requisite arrangements which prudence dictated with regard to his army. A provisional government had already installed itself at Warsaw, composed of the men who favoured the constitution of 1791. King Stanislaus remained in his palace, respected but watched, and was not allowed to take any active part in the government.

On the old square in Cracow, and at a place which is now marked by a commemorative tablet, Kosciuszko took a solemn oath of fealty in the presence of a large concourse of people. He was dressed as he chanced to be, in the simplest of garb, for simplicity of tastes, and especially in the matter of dress, was always one of his characteristics. The oath was as follows:

“ I, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, swear to the Polish nation, in presence of the God, that I will never em-

ploy the power which has been entrusted to me against any citizen; but I will exert it only to defend the integrity of my country, to recover the national independence, and to strengthen the general liberty of the nation. So help me, God!"

On the 1st of April Kosciuszko left Cracow at the head of an army of about four thousand. Most of his troops were simply peasants armed with scythes. He headed straight for the village of Raclawice, where a Russian force three times his own was quartered. Kosciuszko forced the battle, and drew up his little army in three divisions. The few guns he had, and a small force of armed regulars, did terrible execution. Then, with a shout, two thousand peasants armed with their terrible scythes charged the Russians. The shooting and the glitter of the scythes seemed to unnerve the Muscovites. The battle lasted nearly five hours, but victory fell to the Poles and over three thousand Russians were killed. Twelve cannon and many small arms were taken in this one great success of the revolution. This first victory was only a few miles northeast from Cracow.

The success at Raclawice accelerated the development of the armed resistance of the patriots, and the insurrection in Poland became general. It extended all the way from Cracow to Vilna. In vain did the king issue a proclamation denouncing the patriots as enemies. The victory of Raclawice had

electrified all Poland. Cries of "Long live Kosciuszko" spread all over Poland. Even far-away Vilna expelled the Russian commander. The tocsin of war was sounded in all the churches. The Polish troops and citizens in Warsaw turned against the Russians, and for two days a bloody battle waged in the streets of that city. Notwithstanding the superiority in numbers, the Russians were defeated with a loss of twenty-two hundred killed and almost as many taken prisoners. General Igelstrom had great difficulty in escaping with his life.

Nothing seemed able to withstand the impetuosity of these patriots, who were fighting for home and liberty. A council of administration was established in Warsaw, and allegiance given to the movement headed by Kosciuszko. Word was sent to the king that they would obey no orders except those of the dictator. Kosciuszko issued a proclamation freeing every serf who enlisted for the national defence. He wanted to free all the peasants from servitude, but did not dare to risk the loss of support by the aristocracy. He attempted to win the Dissidents by proclaiming liberty of conscience and the equality of religions in the eye of the law. The vacillating king wrote a flattering letter to the dictator full of promises. But Prussia declared war, and forty thousand troops were poured into the country and effected a junction with the Russians. They were headed by the Prussian king in person, and man-

aged to take Cracow. Austria took a hand, and her soldiers marched into Galicia. Kosciuszko returned toward Cracow to defend that city, and an engagement followed at Czczekociny with an army greatly outnumbering his own, which resulted in a slight defeat. But victory generally fell to the Polish arms until Catherine sent her great General Suvarov to head the Russian troops.

At Warsaw the patriots themselves, inflamed by a fiery harangue, executed eight persons whom they considered traitors. The men undoubtedly deserved their fate, as they were members of the traitorous Confederation of Targowice. Nevertheless, Kosciuszko condemned this bloody justice, and insisted on the punishment of the rioters. "This," said Kosciuszko, "will be an indelible stain on the history of our revolution. The loss of two battles would have done us less harm than that unfortunate day." As a result of his investigation he had seven of the ringleaders hung.

The real troubles of the Polish patriots were just beginning. The Russians and Prussians were now pressing in upon Warsaw, and they finally reached the Vola, the field of tragic elections. The Prussian king was obliged to withdraw, however, because of insurrections nearer home. Kosciuszko advanced to meet Suvarov, and a bloody battle followed at Maceiowice. Victory at first wavered between the two forces, when Kosciuszko, at the head of his prin-

cipal officers, made a heroic charge against the enemy. He fell covered with wounds, and all his companions were killed. For some time he lay senseless, but, as soon as the enemy recognized him in his plain uniform, they gave him surgical attention and treated him with the greatest respect. Twenty-one guns and almost three thousand men were captured by the Russians.

This unfortunate event seemed to paralyze the Poles. The news of Kosciuszko's capture spread like wildfire. "Kosciuszko is no more; the country is lost," the people exclaimed. Warsaw was horror-stricken by the unexpected calamity. Only one great battle at Praga, separated only by the width of the Vistula from Warsaw, in which General Suvarov was victorious, followed. This place had been strongly fortified, but the defenders were mostly inexperienced. After its capture a horrible butchery followed, in which twelve thousand Poles are said to have perished by the sword. Thousands of townspeople were murdered in cold blood. The soldiers were so exasperated against the Poles that they refused to give any quarter. "The streets are covered with corpses; blood flows in torrents," was the first dispatch of Suvarov to his government. Warsaw capitulated on the 6th of November, and the Russian troops entered the city. Thousands of the insurgents were sent to the wilds of Siberia.

The third partition of Poland was agreed upon

by treaty of the three powers on the 24th of October, 1795, although all of the details were not completed until the following year. By this third and last partition Russia acquired the remaining portion of Lithuania, together with some other territory; Austria received the greater part of the palatinates of Cracow, Sandomir, Chelin and Lublin; Prussia obtained Eastern Poland, including Warsaw. Such was the result of the glorious but unfortunate revolution of 1794. However inglorious its results may seem to us, Kosciuszko had lived up to the lofty oath which he took.

Stanislaus was now left without a kingdom. He was obliged to go to Grodno, at which place he signed a formal act of abdication on the 23rd of November, 1795. An annual pension of two hundred thousand ducats was ensured to him by the three powers, with the further promises that his many debts also should be paid. The abdication was equivalent to a confirmation of the third partition, which immediately followed. Upon the death of Catherine, in 1796, Stanislaus went to St. Petersburg at the request of the Emperor Paul, who gave him a palace for his use. In that city his unhappy life ended on the 12th of February, 1798, by an attack of apoplexy. He is buried in the Roman Catholic Cathedral on the Nevski Prospect in the Russian capital. His funeral was held with all the honours due a crowned head, and was attended by

Paul himself. "I have always wished for the happiness of my country," Stanislaus said, "and I have caused it only misfortune." He spoke the truth.

Kosciuszko was taken to St. Petersburg, and was kept there as a prisoner of war for two years. His imprisonment, however, was not harsh, as he was allowed many privileges. The noble conduct and honest patriotism of the Polish hero had won for him the sincere admiration of his conquerors. His wounds, which were numerous, were carefully nursed. When Paul came to the throne he paid a personal visit to Kosciuszko in his prison and liberated him. He also made him many presents, including a generous gift of money. He likewise liberated several thousand Polish prisoners who had been sent to Siberia by his mother. Nothing seemed to please Paul so much during his short reign as to reverse the acts of his mother.

After recovering his health sufficiently to make the journey, Kosciuszko decided to make a second visit to the United States. The wife of Paul presented him with seven thousand dollars as a gift, and Paul thirty thousand dollars. Kosciuszko divided the greater part of this money among needy compatriots. His journey hither was a continual ovation. Even London received him with open arms, although he had fought with the colonies against England, and many British statesmen paid

him marked attention. At Bristol a procession of the gentry accompanied by a regiment of dragoons met the modest hero, whose name was on every one's tongue. It was from this city that he embarked on his journey to the new republic which he had helped to free. It was in 1797 that Kosciuszko was in England, and the following is a pen picture of the man as he appeared at that time, written by an English writer:

“ I never contemplated a more interesting human figure than Kosciuszko stretched upon his couch. His wounds were still unhealed, and he was unable to sit upright. He appeared to be a small man, spare and delicate. A black silk bandage crossed his fair and high, but somewhat wrinkled, forehead. Beneath it his dark eagle eye sent forth a stream of light, that indicated the steady flame of patriotism which still burned within his soul; unquenched by disaster and wounds, weakness, poverty, and exile. Contrasted with its brightness was the paleness of his countenance, and the wan cast of every feature. He spoke very tolerable English, though in a low and feeble tone; but his conversation, replete with fine sense, lively remark, and sagacious answers, evinced a noble understanding and a cultivated mind. On rising to depart, I offered him my hand; he took it. My eyes filled with tears; and he gave it a warm grasp. I muttered something about ‘ brighter prospects and happier days.’ He

faintly smiled, and said (they were his last words to me), ‘ Ah! sir, he who devotes himself for his country must not look for his reward on this side of the grave.’ ”

A strong friendship existed between Kosciuszko and many of the American leaders, and particularly so with Jefferson. In a will executed on the 5th of May, 1798, he named Jefferson as his executor. I quote this instrument, because it reveals the noble character of the testator :

“ I, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, being just in my departure from America, do hereby declare and direct that, should I make no other testamentary disposition of my property in the United States, hereby authorize my friend, Thomas Jefferson, to employ the whole thereof in purchasing negroes from among his own, or those of any other gentleman, and give them liberty in my name, in giving them an education in trades or otherwise, and in having them instructed for their new condition in the duties of morality which may make them good neighbours, good fathers or mothers, good husbands or wives, and in their duties as citizens, teaching them to be defenders of their liberty and country, and of the good order of society, and in whatsoever may make them happy and useful, and I make the said Thomas Jefferson my executor of this. T. Kosciuszko, 5th day of May, 1798.”

Kosciuszko remained in the United States eight-

een months, and then returned to France. Congress gave him a public vote of thanks and bestowed upon him a pension. Many were the attentions shown him by persons in every walk of life from President to the humblest individual. Kosciuszko, however, still had hopes of interesting France to restore liberty to his unfortunate country. The government would do nothing, but a banquet was given in his honour which was attended by five hundred persons. His health was proposed and drunk with the usual French exaggeration, and he was enrolled as a citizen of the French Republic. Napoleon himself called upon the hero, and asked him to enlist under his own banner. But Kosciuszko refused all the blandishments of the wily Corsican.

The hopes of Kosciuszko were again aroused upon the accession of Alexander I, and he had several personal interviews with the czar. But these also fell to naught. One letter written in 1814, after the allies had entered Paris, I will quote. On the 9th of April, Kosciuszko, who had been living near Fontainebleau, sent the following letter to the Emperor Alexander, then in that city with his troops:

“SIRE: If from my obscure retreat I dare to address my petition to a great monarch, a great general, and, above all, a protector of humanity, it is because your generosity and magnanimity are well known to me. I request three favours of you;

the first is, to grant a general amnesty to the Poles without any restriction, and that the serfs scattered in foreign countries may be regarded as free if they return to their homes; the second, that your majesty will proclaim yourself king of Poland, with a free constitution approaching to that of England, and that you cause schools to be established there for the instruction of the serfs; that their servitude be abolished at the end of ten years, and that they may enjoy the full possession of their property. If my prayers are granted, I will go in person (though ill) to throw myself at your majesty's feet to thank you, and to be the first to render you homage as my sovereign. If my feeble talents could yet be of any utility, I would set out instantly to rejoin my fellow-citizens, to serve my country and my sovereign with honour and fidelity.

“ My third request, though personal, sire, is near my heart and feelings. I have been living fourteen years in the respectable house of M. Zeltner, of the Swiss nation, formerly ambassador from his country to France. I owe him a thousand obligations, but we are both poor, and he has a numerous family. I beg for him an honourable post, either in the new French government, or in Poland. He has talents, and I vouch for his fidelity under every trial.

“ I am, etc.

“ KOSCIUSZKO.”

To this Alexander returned an autograph answer, which was dated on the historic 3rd of May, so sacred to the Poles:

“ I feel great satisfaction, General, in answering your letter. Your wishes shall be accomplished. With the help of the Almighty, I trust to realize the regeneration of the brave and respectable nation to which you belong. I have made a solemn engagement, and its welfare has always occupied my thoughts. Political affairs alone have hindered the execution of my plans. How satisfactory it would be to me, General, to see you my helpmate in the accomplishment of these salutary labours! Your name, your character, your talents, will be my best support.

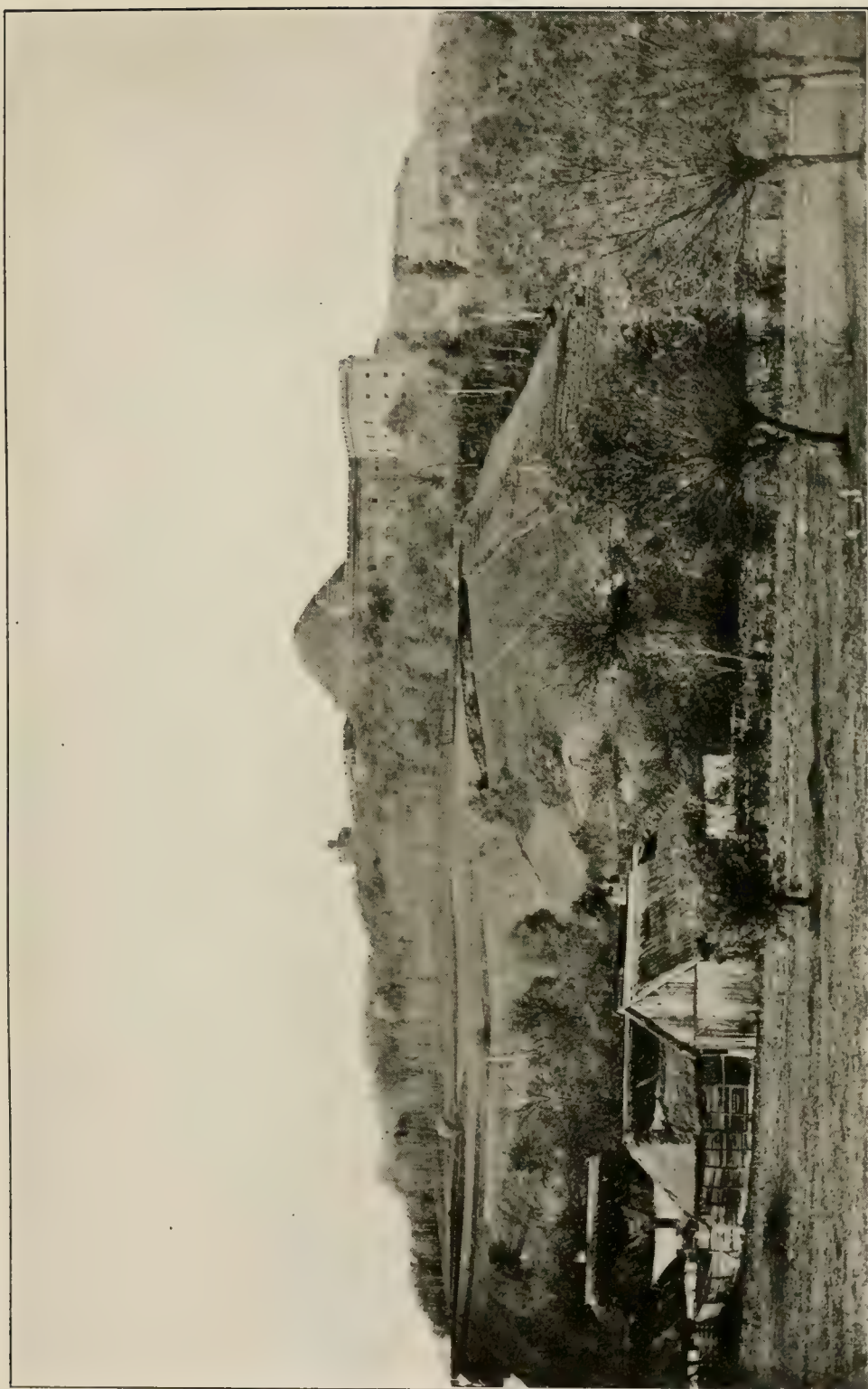
“ Accept, General, the assurance of all my esteem.

“ ALEXANDER.”

The later years of Kosciuszko were spent on a little farm in Solothurn (Soleure), Switzerland, where a few friends of his earlier days, expatriated like himself, were generally gathered. A fall from his horse, while taking a solitary ride, caused injuries which brought about his death on the 26th of October, 1817, at the age of seventy-one. His remains were brought back to Cracow by Alexander I of Russia, and were there deposited in the Wawel by the side of the kings, none of whom had a greater

claim to the affections of the Poles. His memory remains absolutely untarnished, and he was always known as incorruptible. The history of the world shows few examples of such great and unselfish patriotism and love of liberty as animated the brave Kosciuszko.

On the hill called Bronislaw, the most conspicuous landmark visible from Cracow, has been erected a memorial to Kosciuszko in the shape of a huge mound, sixty-five feet high, which is one of the most unique monuments to human greatness that can be found anywhere in the world. It is built on a hill several hundred feet above the level country. This monument was constructed in 1820-1823, and was made of earth gathered from the many battlefields where this patriot fought. Every bit of the soil was carried to this spot by his enthusiastic fellow-countrymen, nobles and peasants alike assisting in this work of affection. The centre was a bit of earth from the battlefield of Raclawice, and about it were placed contributions from other scenes of conflicts.



THE KOSCIUSZKO MOUND, NEAR CRACOW.



CHAPTER X

AFTER THE DISMEMBERMENT

The Polish Legions — Dombrowski — Napoleon — Grand Duchy of Warsaw — Moscow disaster — Death of Joseph Poniatsowski — The fourth partition — The Kingdom of Poland — Revolution of 1830 — Free city of Cracow — Trouble in Galicia — Uprising of 1863.

HAD Europe been tranquil at the time of Poland's dismemberment, the great nations of that continent might have come to the rescue of this unfortunate country. But France was in turmoil, and the events of the French Revolution absorbed the attention of every other European ruler. Louis XVI was executed by the infuriated populace, and the Reign of Terror had begun in the same year that the second partition was made. As a consequence other monarchs sat trembling upon their thrones, and could give to suffering Poland no more than a passing sigh.

After the third and final partition of Poland, hundreds of the national patriots emigrated from their homes. France was the only country which appealed to them at that time, as it seemed to be the one place where liberty was cherished. In spite of the bloodshed and anarchy which prevailed there, a real spirit of independence seemed to exist. That country seemed to promise more hope of assistance

to the Poles in recovering their independence than any of the others. Some fled to Venice, and in both that city and Paris an embryo confederacy was formed. In Galicia a conspiracy was likewise organized as early as 1796, and the leaders of it, with a couple of thousand troops, crossed over into the neighbouring borders of Turkey. They hoped to interest the sultan in their cause, knowing the long and bitter enmity which had existed between the Porte and Russia. These events were prior to the time that Napoleon arrived at the head of France. Because of his prominence, however, the Poles were attracted to him and early began negotiations with him.

At this time the condition of the Poles in Russian provinces was better than their compatriots in either Prussia or Austria, for Prussia had promptly begun her attempts at Germanization. Catherine's son, Paul, who succeeded to the throne in 1796, seemed to take a delight in upsetting the things that his mother had done. This reacted to the benefit of Poland. Paul set free the Polish prisoners, numbering some twelve thousand, and granted to the Polish provinces a considerable degree of autonomy. Such kindness and clemency could not do otherwise than have a good effect, and was really more formidable than the sword. Prussia had likewise discontinued some of her persecutions, and Austria seemed to be the hardest on her Polish subjects.

The beginning of the Polish Legions, which afterward became very famous during the wars of Napoleon, was in 1797. Under the leadership of John Henry Dombrowski, who had enlisted under France the previous year, a small band of twelve hundred men was organized who took service with France. These troops kept their national costumes, with the exception of the French cockade. They were formed into two battalions, and fought under the Cisalpine Republic in a number of campaigns in Italy. Their number gradually increased, until in a few months they numbered five thousand men when war was undertaken with Austria. They served to keep the name of Poland alive, and even fought against the Pope himself. In this campaign they captured the Turkish standard secured by Sobieski, which had been presented to the Vatican, and the sword of that famous general. The flag ever afterwards accompanied the Polish Legions, and the sword was given to Kosciuszko as the man most worthy of possessing such a treasure.

It was on the 11th of November, 1799, after his return from the victorious Egyptian campaign, that Napoleon was raised to the consulship of France. From that time, until the downfall of the Corsican, the Polish Legions did valiant service. The Poles felt that they were fighting for their own liberty, as well as the rest of Europe, for they always believed the promises of that wily general. Kos-

ciuszko himself is the one exception. Although living in France, he refused to take up arms with Napoleon against Russia. He perhaps feared a military despot as much as a hereditary tyrant. He is quoted as saying that it would simply be "despotism for despotism." When, in 1806, the Polish troops marched with Napoleon into Berlin, their hearts beat high with expectancy. Their numbers increased rapidly as they neared the Russian borders. On the 27th of November of that year Napoleon established his headquarters at Posen. His entry was a triumph, and the people hailed him as the saviour of their country.

A few weeks later Napoleon entered Warsaw, and the Russian troops were driven out. "The popular intoxication," writes the Countess Potocka, "was at its height; the whole town was lit up as if by magic. That day, forsooth, the authorities had no need to allot quarters to the new arrivals; people fought for them, carried them off, vied with each other in treating them best. Those of the citizens who knew no French, not being able to make themselves understood, borrowed the dumb language which belongs to all countries, and, by signs of delight, handshakings, and bursts of glee, made their guests comprehend that they freely offered them all the house contained, the cellar included. Tables were even laid in the streets and squares. Our future independence, the brave army, the great

Napoleon, were toasted many a time. There was embracing and fraternizing and a little too much drinking, for the soldiers ended by giving way to excesses which momentarily cooled the ardour which had prompted their reception."

A temporary government was established by Napoleon, and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, consisting of six provinces and a population of about two millions, was erected. The little duchy was given a government elaborate enough for France itself, so that mere political existence was weighty. The expenses were more than twice the total revenue, so that even with abundant harvests, bankruptcy soon faced the little duchy. Armies marched through her territories and plundered the inhabitants at will. Distinguished Poles were placed at the head of the various departments of the government, and Frederick Augustus, King of Saxony, the man whom the Poles had chosen for their throne to succeed Stanislaus, was selected as grand duke. The first Diet was held in March, 1809. Scarcely had the Diet finished its labours when Austria declared war against France. The Poles fought valiantly for Napoleon's cause, and the Austrians were eventually compelled to seek peace. It was then that a number of the Austrian Polish provinces, including that of Cracow, were added to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

The misery of all classes of Poles at this time was

extreme. It was only the hope of ultimate independence that kept up their courage. Although Alexander had treated his subjects well upon his accession after the death of Paul, in 1801, they were still anxious for independence. When Napoleon made his famous march to Moscow in 1812, almost seventy thousand Poles marched with him. They suffered their full share of the hardships of the terrible retreat from that city, and distinguished themselves in the various battles which ensued. When Napoleon entered Vilna, he was received with the greatest acclaim. Public ceremonies were held in which the decision of the Polish Diet, pronouncing the re-establishment of the kingdom of Poland, was solemnly accepted by the Lithuanians. This ceremony took place in the cathedral of Vilna, in which all the nobility had assembled dressed in the ancient Polish costumes in honour of the occasion. The people expected an announcement from Napoleon that Poland would be restored under his protection. They felt that now the time for revenge had arrived for which they had waited and the Polish legions had fought for eighteen years. This the wily Corsican did not do, although requested by a delegation that called upon him, because he did not wish to alienate Austria just then. "I applaud all that you have done," said he, "but I have guaranteed to the Emperor of Austria the integrity of his state."

It is always interesting to speculate, even if speculation is futile. "If Napoleon," says Rambaud, the historian of Russia, "instead of plunging into Russia, had contented himself with organizing and defending the ancient principality of Lithuania, no power on earth could have prevented the re-establishment of the Polish-Lithuanian State within its former limits. The destinies of France and Europe would have been changed." The Grand Army would have been preserved at least, and Russia would have been weakened. The final downfall of Napoleon was due to the hostility and persistence of Alexander more than any other one cause. Alexander had resolved to pursue the common enemy "down to his last man and his last rouble." Poland might still have been preserved among the nations of the world.

When Napoleon deserted his troops after the disaster of Moscow, and fled to Paris, Prince Joseph Poniatowski was chosen as commander and chief of the Polish forces. Nearly twenty thousand men still survived the Russian campaign. Poniatowski was compelled to evacuate Warsaw, and went to Cracow. After a few weeks he was forced to leave that city and entered Austrian territories. Later he again joined Napoleon and took part in the famous battle of Leipzig, in April, 1813, where he lost his life by drowning in leading his troops across the Elster River. The bridge had been blown up and Ponia-

towski, to avoid capture, leaped into the swollen waters of the river. One of his arms was then in a sling as the result of a wound. Only four days before this he had been appointed a marshal of the empire by Bonaparte. His remains now rest in the Wawel. The survivors of the Polish army remained with Napoleon, and retreated to Paris. Some of them went to the island of San Domingo to fight against the insurrection there, and were captured by the English. A few Polish officers even wanted to accompany Napoleon in his exile to St. Helena, so loyal were they to him and his cause.

On the 3rd of May, 1815, the Congress of Vienna settled the fate of Poland. The Powers represented there seemed agreed upon the iniquity of the previous partitionings. Gaiety ruled while the negotiations were proceeding. At length news reached the Congress of the landing of Napoleon after his escape from Elba, and this event hastened the conclusion of the negotiations. Alexander got more than he had dared to hope for. The treaty agreed to by the Powers was really a fourth partitioning, for it wrested from Germany a large part of what she had previously obtained. The greater part of the former domains was formed into a kingdom, of which the Czar of Russia was made king. It was decided that the kingdom should have a separate constitution and administration. Austria was to

keep Galicia and the famous salt mines of Wieliczka; Germany was to retain all that she received at the first partition; Cracow was erected into a republic with a distinct constitution under the protection of the three powers.

In November, 1815, Czar Alexander arrived at Warsaw, where he was received with great enthusiasm, and was crowned as king. "The emperor came," says the Countess Potocka in her "Memoirs," "escorted by a whole staff of Polish generals; himself wore our military uniform, and wore no decoration but the cordon of the White Eagle. It looked as though, striving to make us forget that he was ruling other peoples, he wished to instil into us as much confidence as affection. His insinuating manners, the gentle and benevolent expression of his face, touched every one, and, let us frankly confess, the ease with which we Poles allow ourselves to be impressed did the remainder, and I believe on that day, Alexander, carried away by the outburst of the sentiments his presence evoked, *imagined* a free and independent Poland, where he would have found a home and faithful subjects."

The booming of cannon announced the restoration of Poland. A constitution was drawn up which was almost as liberal as the famous constitution of 1791. Alexander seemed to take a real pleasure in thus giving expression to his liberalism. A parlia-

ment was erected which was composed of two houses, of which the upper house should consist of princes, bishops, palatines and castellans; the lower house contained double the number of members, to be elected by the nobles of the various districts, and a few of them by the common people. Poland was even to have a national army, and to use a national flag. The Diet was to meet every second year in Warsaw, to sit for thirty days, and all matters were to be decided by a majority vote. Freedom of the press and person, and unqualified use of the language was assured. Amnesty was granted to all who had borne arms against Russia. A proclamation was issued embodying these guarantees, and Prince Czartoryski was placed at the head of the government.

“With the help of God,” said Alexander, “I hope to extend these beneficent principles to all the countries that Providence has confided to my care.” Thus it was not Poland alone, but also Russia that received a tacit promise of a future enjoyment of constitutional liberties. Poland accepted his assurances in full faith.

A brother of the czar, Grand Duke Constantine, was given charge of the Polish army, and was made the official representative of the Russian Empire. Constantine was the heir to the Russian throne, but had renounced the right of succession in order to marry a Polish woman. Thus his sympathies were



ALEXANDER I

with Poland, but he had not the qualifications for a satisfactory ruler.

Lithuania was not included in the kingdom, but was formed into a separate province, governed by laws not quite so liberal, and was more under the power of the imperial edicts. Under this constitution the first Diet was opened by Alexander himself on the 17th of March, 1818. Alexander's character changed, however, in the later years of his life. The liberator of Europe, the champion of liberal ideas, yielded to mysticism and complete reaction. Even before his death in 1825, the administration of the laws became less liberal. As early as 1819 a censorship had been established. The Polish Diet fought bravely for its liberties, and strenuously resisted every encroachment by the autocracy. During the last five years of Alexander's reign the Diet was not convened, and only once was it called by his successor.

The year 1830 was a portentous one in Europe, for it was marked by the famous revolution in France. The spirit of unrest likewise reached Poland as well as other countries. Nicholas personally opened the Diet of May, 1830, but instead of quieting the discontent the result was exactly the opposite. The Polish demands exceeded his willingness to grant concessions. Almost spontaneously an insurrection broke out on November 29th. Some students in Warsaw attempted to seize the Grand Duke

Constantine at his residence, the Palace of Belvedere, and he barely escaped. The Polish troops revolted and killed some of their officers; the director of police and some other officials were slain. Many thousands of muskets were seized in the arsenal and distributed among the insurgents. The populace were maddened. The army under Constantine had numbered sixty thousand, and this was increased to ninety thousand by new levies.

The patriot Chlopicki was made generalissimo of the Polish forces. He despatched envoys to St. Petersburg and to the western courts. Chlopicki was not radical enough to please the dominant element and soon resigned; Prince Radzewill succeeded him. The Diet was summoned, and formally declared that the Romanovs had forfeited the throne. Adam Czartoryski was placed at the head of the government. Fortifications were thrown up to protect Warsaw. But a force of one hundred and twenty thousand Russians was sent against them under Gen. Diebitch, the hero of the Balkans. A two days' battle was fought at Grochov, in which the Poles distinguished themselves, but they were not able to check the approach of the Russians. Then followed engagements at Bialolenski and in the woods near Praga. But even in this time of trial political divisions broke out. A riot occurred in Warsaw, and for two days the streets ran with blood. Massacres were committed even in the prisons.



CHŁOPICKI.

Czartoryski fled, and Gen. Krukowiecki succeeded as dictator. He was soon replaced by Niemoievski. A number of engagements were fought over the country. But the Russians crossed the Vistula and approached the city from the Vola plain. Warsaw was compelled to unconditional surrender early in September, less than a year from the beginning of the ill-advised rebellion.

“ Warsaw is at your feet,” wrote the Russian commander to Nicholas. Not Warsaw alone, but all of Poland lay at the feet of the czar. The reprisals of the Russian autocrat were severe. The constitution granted by Alexander was annulled; many were banished to Siberia; commissions were appointed to administer the government; the Polish army was merged in the imperial army; Russian provinces replaced the former palatinates; the University of Vilna was suppressed, the Polish language forbidden in Lithuania, and the Uniates were placed under the ban. Europe refused to take up the cause of Poland, although appealed to by Czartoryski and others who visited a number of the capitals.

Russian Poland remained fairly tranquil for a period of years. In 1846, however, trouble arose in Austrian Poland. The nobles had made preparations to revolt against Austria, and the peasants in their turn revolted against the landlords. The rumour was systematically spread among the peas-

ants that the emperor had granted them the soil for partition, but that the nobles were suppressing this boon. Their fury knew no bounds. In three days two thousand men, women, and children of the noble rank were killed. Some were burned to death, others flogged until life was extinct, while still others were literally cut to pieces. The free city of Cracow gave asylum to the refugees, and their movements were directed from that remaining fragment of the old republic. Russian, Austrian and Prussian troops entered that country, and these powers decreed that Cracow should be annexed to Austria.

The Crimean War aroused the hopes of the Poles, but even Napoleon III turned a deaf ear to their appeals. When peace was concluded with Russia, Poland was not considered. The accession of the liberal Alexander II also awakened hopes of at least the re-establishment of the constitution. Prominent Poles were still intriguing with the emissaries of Russia. Agrarian agitation helped to keep the political ferment active. On the 29th of November, 1860, the thirtieth anniversary of the last revolution, demonstrations took place on the streets of Warsaw. Portraits of Kosciuszko were distributed, and patriotic religious exercises were held in the churches. On the 25th of February, 1861, the anniversary of the battle of Grochov, the agricultural society held a meeting to deliberate on a peti-

tion to Alexander. Great crowds gathered in the street and patriotic songs were sung. On the 27th five men were killed in the attempt of the authorities to restore order. All these demonstrations were without resort to arms. As a concession Alexander decreed a council of state and elective councils.

On the 7th of April a crowd gathered in front of the Zamek, but it dispersed before the hostile attitude of the troops. On the following day greater crowds appeared, shouting that they wanted a country. A postillion played on his cornet the favourite air of Dombrowski's legions. Charges of cavalry had no effect on the inert masses gathered together, and then resort was made to more deadly means. The soldiers fired several volleys, and two hundred men, women and children were killed, besides the wounding of many more. On the following day the people appeared in mourning, in spite of the instructions of the police. Count Lambert was appointed as viceroy in an effort to conciliate the people, but he was recalled. Grand Duke Constantine undertook the task, and he was equally unsuccessful. Two attempts were made on his life. The Poles insisted that Lithuania and all the former Polish provinces should be treated as Poland, although much of this territory was looked upon by the ruling power as strictly Russian. Count Zamoiski, who was looked upon as the leader, was exiled, and a number of agitators were arrested. On

the night of the 15th of January, 1863, the government laid violent hands on the recruits. At least two thousand were thus seized in Warsaw alone, and forced into the army. All possibility of an understanding was now at an end.

The insurrection that now arose could not compare with that of 1831, for there was no Polish army. It was really a guerilla warfare. There were no battles and only a few skirmishes. Bodies of undisciplined men, unfamiliar with military tactics, plunged into the thick forests and harassed the Russian troops. Few of them had muskets, and many had only pikes and scythes. The most serious conflict took place at Vengrov, on the 6th of February. The insurgents were able to kill many whom they considered especially hostile. No quarter was given by the Russian troops. When the insurgents were captured, they were hung or shot. At least one village, that of Ibiány, was destroyed. General Mouriavief, the Russian commander, declared it was "useless to make prisoners."

In May, 1864, the insurrection ended. It had cost Poland dear. The last vestige of autonomy disappeared, and the Russian language became the official medium. The "kingdom" was left only as a name. The University of Warsaw was Russified. England, France and Austria protested through diplomatic channels, but their protests were unheeded. Prussia gave Russia active support, and had even en-

" . . . The heart of Poland hath not ceased
To quiver, though her sacred blood doth drown
The fields; and out of every mouldering town
. . .
Cries to Thee, ' Lord, how long shall these things be?
How long shall the icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region? ' "

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPITAL OF POLAND'S GLORY

Journey from Vienna — A republic — An old city — University of Cracow — Wawel — Many churches — Cathedral and royal tombs — Jagiello Library — The Planté — The Rynek — The Sukiennice — Market — Municipal custom — The Kazimierz — Jews.

WHEN you board the train of the Northern Railway in Vienna, you seem to be leaving behind you Europe, at least the Europe that is best known. You begin to get a taste of the change that is coming before you enter your compartment. There will be Czechs, Germans, Ruthenians, and Poles — and it is to the old home of the latter that we are bound.

It is also the main line of railway leading from Vienna to Odessa, Kiev, Moscow, and at the latter city connection is made with the Trans-Siberian Railway, so that there are likely to be Russians and Western Europeans bound for some point in Russia or the Orient. Altogether the passenger list will show representatives of a great many nationalities.

There is little to see in the six or seven hours' journey to Cracow, except one little mud hut after another, a few unimportant towns, many half-naked children, wandering pigs and geese. The last named fowl will be seen everywhere, and it is a common

sight to see women driving their awkward charges to the water. They are herded together like the village cows, and are gathered together in the morning by the herder. In the evening the flock diminishes as the various cottages are passed, for each goose seems to know its own domicile and drops out voluntarily. Some ridges of the Little Carpathians are visible in the distance, on which the snow may be seen long after it has disappeared on the level ground. The poverty and squalor seems to become even more apparent as Poland is approached.

At last Cracow is reached. Porters by the dozen will be awaiting the incoming train ready to take personal charge of both passengers and baggage. They mean well and are reliable, even if they are a little impetuous at times. Cracow is in the northern part of Austria, not far from the Russian border, and was at one time one of the most important towns in Europe. When Poland was at the height of her power, and before the removal of the seat of the government to Warsaw, in 1610, Cracow was the capital of a country which was at that time one of the largest kingdoms of Europe, being half as large again as the France of to-day.

Cracow was also the last capital of Poland as an entity. After the division of most of the country among Russia, Germany and Austria, this city fell to Austria. But Napoleon stepped in and took it; a congress held in Vienna afterwards declared Cra-

cow and a small district surrounding “for ever a free, independent and neutral city under the protection of Russia, Austria, and Prussia.” This was in 1815. It was left as a republic until 1846, when Austria assumed the sovereignty after some disturbances had arisen among the peasants of Galicia. Thus it was the last rallying point of Polish national existence, and to-day it is the most characteristically Polish of any city. Warsaw is much larger and more cosmopolitan, and even Posen is of greater commercial importance. But the real heart of the national Polish spirit is in Krakau, as they write it, and the affection of the Poles turns toward this city as a precious memento of their vanished glory.

Cracow is an old city, no one knows just how old, since its origin is lost in tradition. Its foundation is attributed to a mountain chief named Krakus, who built a fortress on the Wawel hill in the sixth century, after killing a dragon that dwelt there. Since that time Cracow has witnessed many stormy scenes, and on at least four different occasions it was in the hands of foreign invaders. Authentic history carries one back into quite a remote period, for the University of Cracow has already celebrated the five hundredth anniversary of its birth. This institution, which was first established by Casimir the Great in 1364, is a living monument to the statesmanship and liberality of the early Polish

kings. Since the year 1400 it has never ceased the work of granting degrees. Many of the foremost men of Poland owe their education to this university.

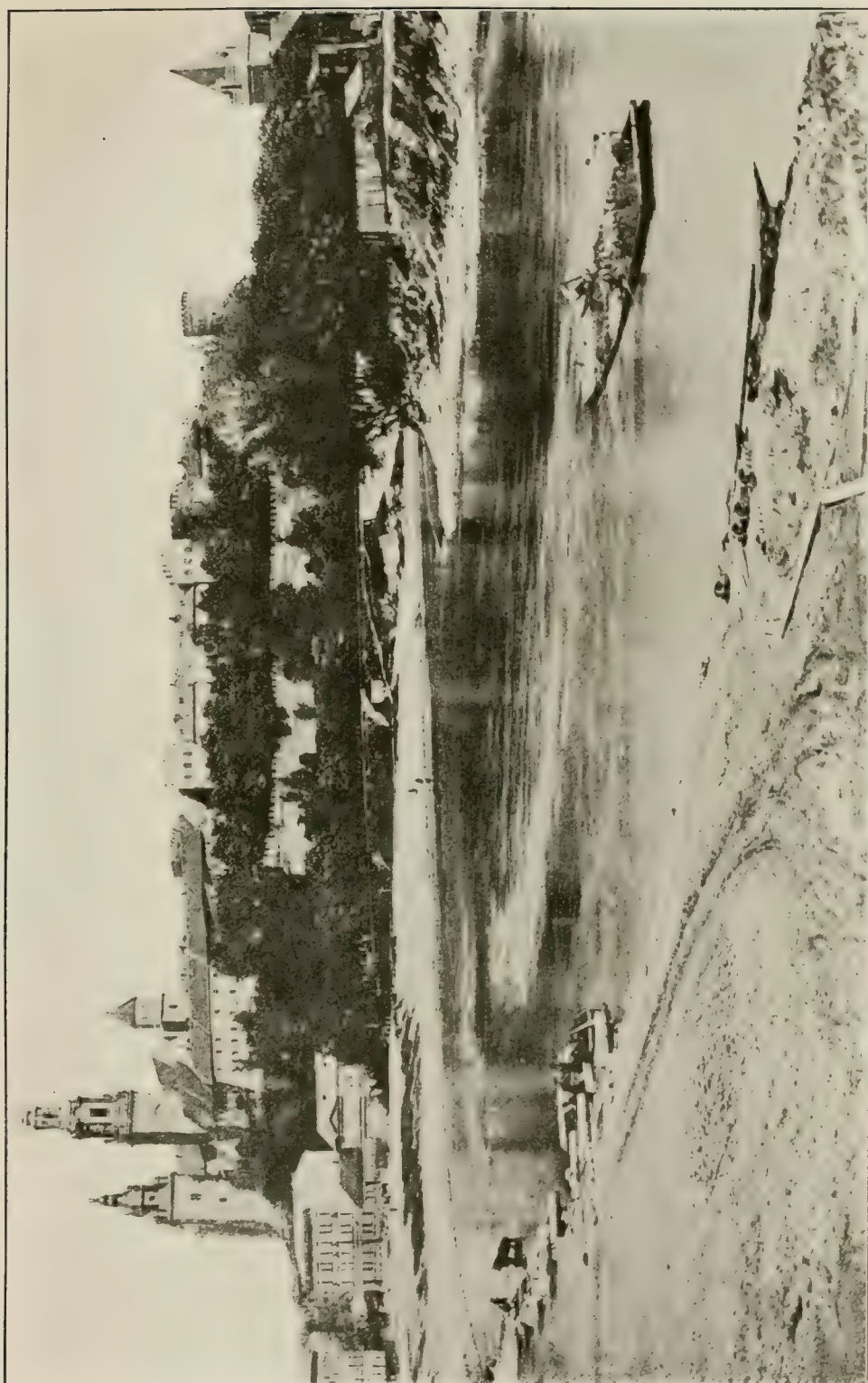
Having been thrown in touch with many Poles in the United States, and knowing their intense loyalty to everything Polish, it was with great interest that I reached this city in which, for several centuries, had been concentrated all the hopes and aspirations of that race. All patriotic Americans can take a little interest as well, for Kosciuszko now lies at rest in the crypt of the cathedral amidst the sarcophagi of the old Polish kings.

The most striking feature in Cracow is the Wawel, (pronounced Vah-vel), which is really a small fortified city in itself, and is situated on a hill which overlooks the rest of the city. It has a cathedral with its numerous chapels, barracks for its soldiers, dwelling-houses for the retainers, and a palace in which the kings themselves resided. Situated as it is on an imposing elevation, and overlooking the Vistula River, it has a formidable appearance, as it is entirely surrounded by lofty walls with towers at the corners. Cannon have belched forth their death-dealing messages from this enclosure on several occasions. It has been the scene of many interesting historical events. Memories of Casimir the Great, Sigismund the father and Sigismund the son, the brave Stephen Batory, and other sovereigns, linger

around these old walls and turrets. The tragedy of a prelate slain by his sovereign, and the comedy of a king fleeing from his sceptre like a malefactor by night, mingle in one's retrospections.

For a long time the Wawel was used by the Austrians as a military barracks, but the Poles disliked this use of a place so sacred to them. The Austrian government offered to give it up if the city would provide other barracks. This has been done, and to-day the palace is being restored to its ancient splendour. The work is being thoroughly done, and the palace of the Wawel will be maintained as a national museum and memorial by this patriotic people. The court within has responded many times to the jousts of knights. I had the pleasure of going through the palace with a Polish noble and his family, all of whom spoke English fairly well, and it was interesting to notice the feeling almost of reverence with which they looked upon this antique pile.

“Do you see the many churches?” said one of the young ladies, as we reached a place where we had a magnificent outlook upon this old city. She pointed out the various church spires and towers, uplifted above the low roofs. “There are almost forty of them,” she continued. This was said with a feeling of almost reverential pride. To the Poles these churches of Cracow are holy places.



THE WAWEL, CRACOW.

The Cracovians are a very religious people. The city is seen at its best on a religious holiday, when the people all turn out for the processions. The Corpus Christi celebration in Cracow is a very impressive occasion. The many great churches and the numerous street shrines over the city testify to their religious fervour. Their worship is full of ecclesiastical pageantry and devotional symbolisms. The churches are a perfect riot of decorations. Gold, silver, jewels, rare marbles, costly carved woods, sculptures, beaten work in metals, — all of these will be found in great profusion within them.

One of the most splendid of Cracow's religious edifices is St. Mary's, or the Panna Marya, on the market square. It is a Gothic basilica with Byzantine touches, and was founded in 1223, but rebuilt three centuries later. The principal altar is a gorgeous affair, and the church contains many old tombs as well as costly vestments. The walls are painted with several hundred golden angels on a blue background. The entrance to the churches is usually besieged by a multitude of mendicants, who piteously solicit alms of those who enter. Another curious sight is the great number of death notices posted on the fence or wall in front of the churches. Each death is announced in poster form in great black letters, and with a large black cross on it as well.

The cathedral in the Wawel has heretofore been the only spot which has not been robbed of at least a part of its former glory, and it became a place of pilgrimage to every loyal Pole. It is the richest and most magnificent of all in its decorations. The Polish kings were always crowned here after the removal of the capital to this city, the only exception being the last one, the unfortunate Stanislaus. Its splendour dates from Casimir III, who greatly embellished it in the fourteenth century. It has been called the Westminster Abbey of the Poles, for her greatest dead lie buried here, down underneath the floor of the sanctuary. It contains many chapels, all gaudily ornamented. The Poles have always been lavish in their gifts to religion, hence one will find gold, silver, precious stones, beautifully carved woods and the rarest of marbles in abundance in this cathedral. In the centre is a tabernacle, which covers a silver shrine in which are relics of St. Stanislaus, the patron saint of Poland. It was he whom Boleslaw II, rebuked for his cruelties, beheaded with his own hand at the altar. The great altar is backed by four massive columns, each of which is heavily covered with gold. Through splendid stained glass windows the sunlight filters a perfect kaleidoscope of colour upon the many altars.

The finest chapel is probably that of Sigismund Augustus. It is built of red Italian marble, almost as delicately carved as wood. The tomb itself is

gilded with pure gold, and it is said to have been painted black during foreign invasions in order to check the cupidity of irreverent soldiers. Another splendid tomb is that of Casimir the Great, who lies under a canopy. He is represented as a man of sturdy build and with wide forehead. It was he who threw into the Vistula an ecclesiastic sent to notify him of his excommunication for licentiousness. The crowned head here lies upon a cushion, with a lion resting at his feet, and in his hands is held a sceptre. If the effigies on the tombs are true likenesses, as they are claimed to be, the Wawel is a good place to study the characteristics of the various sovereigns. History only deepens the impressions conveyed by these sculptured representations.

For a small fee the sacristan conducts the visitor down through a trap-door to the crypt, where he can wander among the leaden coffins which hold men who have fought in almost every European war, and some who even crossed the seas in their pursuit of the war-dogs. In America, Asia and Africa, these men drenched the soil with their blood. Among them is John Sobieski, to whose genius was due the defeat of the Turks at Vienna, which prevented those Asiatic invaders, and followers of Mohammed, from spreading over the rest of Europe as they at one time threatened to do. His tomb of red marble really occupies the place of

honour, and is sculptured with figures of kneeling Turks. With the exception of the early kings buried at Posen, and the last king, Stanislaus Poniatowski, who is buried in St. Petersburg, nearly all the kings are buried here.

The laws of Poland ordained that the body of a deceased king should be carried to Warsaw, where it should remain until the election of a new sovereign. This was done to avoid even the appearance of an interregnum, for as long as the body of the king remained unburied Poland was not without a sovereign. After a new king had been elected, it was then removed in state to Cracow, and the actual burial ceremonies were held just prior to the coronation of the successor. As a part of the ceremony each king was obliged to denounce the murder of Bishop Stanislaus as "atrocious," state that he "detested" it, and asked pardon for it by imploring the protection of the holy martyr upon himself and his kingdom.

All that there is left of a nation which conquered by the sword, and perished by the sword, are a few battle-flags which have been torn by shot and shell, and such trophies as Turkish swords and German standards which still find a place in this abode of the dead in the Wawel. But no clank of sabres greets one here to-day. One is inclined to become retrospective amid such scenes, and the words of a Polish poet seem so true:



THE OLD FLORIAN GATE, CRACOW.

“ Oh! ye exiles who so long wander over the earth,
Where will you find a resting-place for your weary feet?
The wild dove has its nest, and the worm a clod of earth,
Each man has a country,
The Pole has but a grave.”

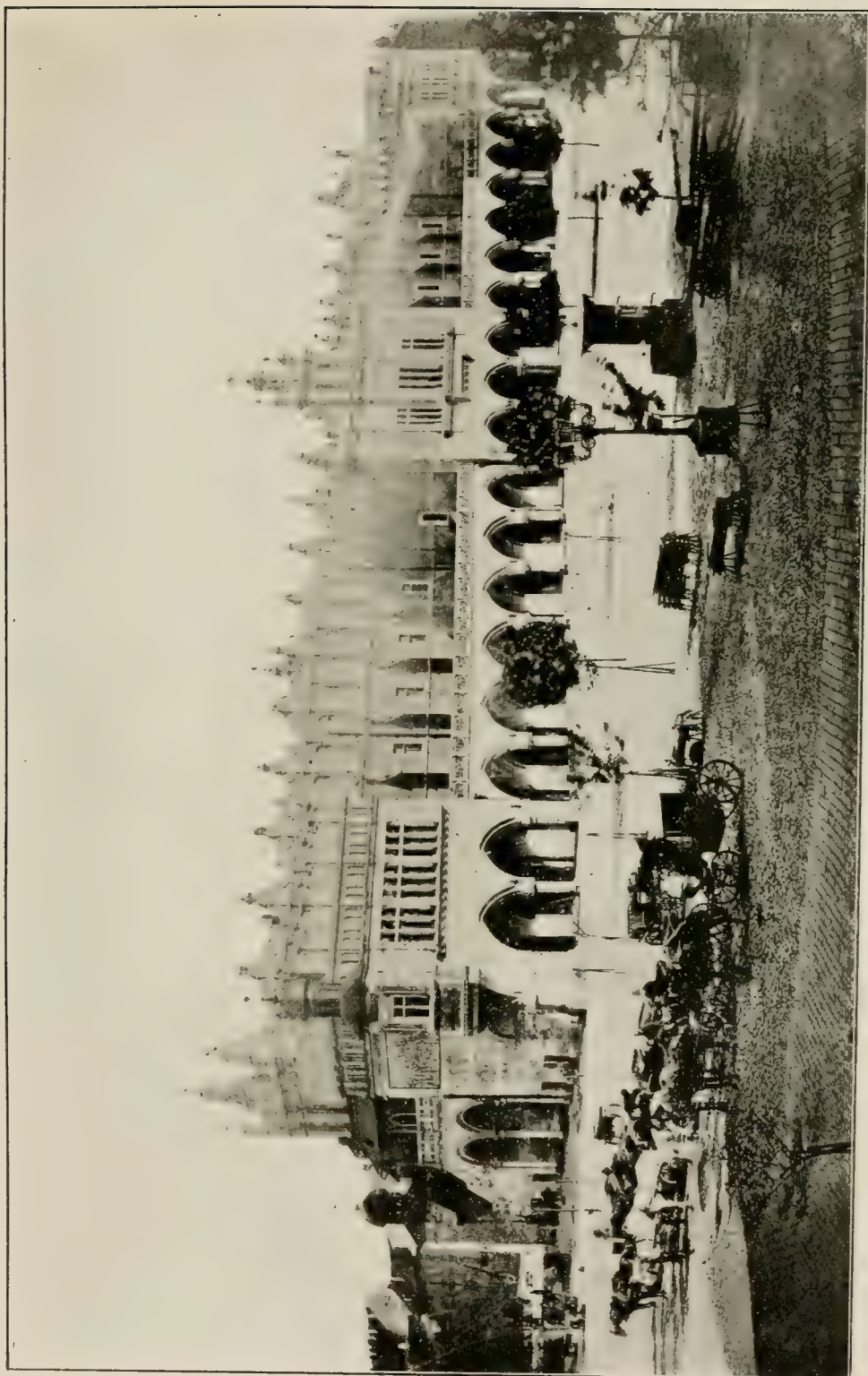
The Jagiello Library is a curious building with a quaint quadrangle, and houses many Polish treasures. Especially interesting are the early editions of native authors, and it contains the rarest treasures of the Polish press. The names of many famous visitors are shown in an album preserved here. In the University is a statue of Copernicus, who was one of its professors. The flourishing time of this institution was in the sixteenth century, when a number of German professors fled here to escape German persecution. The Czartoryski Museum contains many interesting souvenirs of Polish life, including portraits and medals of her kings and famous men. The old Florian Gate, built in 1498, is the only one of the old gateways that still remains. It stands at the end of one of the principal streets.

The Planté is a broad and attractive boulevard which encircles the city just outside the old fortifications, occupying the site of the former moat. It is a well shaded walk, and bordered with flower-beds which are always kept presentable. The newer public buildings and many handsome residences face the Planté. It is the favourite afternoon prom-

enade of the Cracovians. All classes of the city, from dignified professors and sedate priests to pompous Austrian officers and cringing Jews in their long coats, may be seen here taking an airing.

There is a fine theatre in Cracow, for of all amusements the Poles are fondest of drama. It is built so that the building has a fine perspective, and everything about it shows an artistic taste. It is entirely the work of Polish art. Here one can witness real Polish plays, dramas which set forth the tragic events of Poland's history. Plays which would not be permitted in Warsaw are freely given here, and Russian Poles come in large numbers to witness them. Madam Modjeska acted in this theatre a number of times before her death, for she was above all intensely Polish in her sympathies.

But more interesting than this old historic pile is the life of the people to-day. This can be seen to the best advantage in the old market-place, or Rynek, as the Poles call it. This is a picturesque old square in the heart of the city. In the centre is the Sukiennice, which is one of the most impressive as well as interesting buildings in this city. It was built in the fourteenth century as a cloth hall, or place of exhibition of merchandise, principally of dress-stuffs, which gave it its name. The upper floor is to-day used as a gallery for the exhibition of paintings, and a museum in which the works of old and modern Polish artists will be found; but



THE SUKIENNICE, CRACOW.

the lower floor, which is a vaulted corridor, is still divided into market stalls and panelled at regular intervals with the local or national coats of arms. Just outside is a statue of the poet Mickiewicz, who is likewise thus honoured in Warsaw and Posen. An old Gothic tower on the opposite side is all that is left of the old town hall, which was destroyed a century ago. It is now the principal guard-house.

At night half the inhabitants spend an hour or two walking along two sides of the Rynek, and on the side streets. Men and women, Jews and Gentiles, plump Jewesses and picturesquely clad Polish girls, all walk back and forth on the sidewalk for their evening outing. Roman Catholic priests in their long robes occasionally mingle with their parishioners. The Jews lightly swing their little walking-sticks as they stroll along, and occasionally are jeered or jostled by some of the Polish youth. Soldiers in natty uniforms, and with clanking swords, are the most conspicuous, and they seem to like to attract attention. But that is a common trait of the soldier everywhere, and especially so in Europe. An occasional automobile passing by gives a touch of modernity to the scene, and breaks the ranks of the strollers at the street intersections.

There is a picturesqueness about the market in Cracow, and the variety of things offered there for sale, which is very interesting. Gaily dressed peasant women bring their wares in from the country,

which may consist of vegetables and fruits, or chickens and ducks, alive and protesting noisily against their shackles. In the summer time they will be barefooted, and at other seasons they wear the same coarse boots as their husbands and brothers. Women tramp into the city for miles with a couple of cans of milk or cream tied across their shoulders with a sheet. Women buyers taste it, and then bargain for its purchase. Great loaves of bread and piles of small cakes are heaped upon tables awaiting customers, regardless of the dust that may be flying about.

At the entrance to the town custom collectors are stationed who examine every basket and bundle, or cart-load, and the owner must pay according to its value. Women are compelled to open up their bundles. The men are obliged to unload their carts and carry the contents to the scales to have them weighed, in order that the proper amount can be levied. I saw men come in with their small wagons filled with freshly slaughtered meat from across the Franz Joseph Bridge over the Vistula, which leads to the suburb of Podgorze, where probably fifteen thousand people have their homes. The entire load had to be carried over to the scales and weighed, and then reloaded. Such a thing as weighing the load and later the wagon seemed never to have entered their heads.

Such scenes as these just described have occurred



THE MARKET PLACE, CRACOW.

on every Tuesday and Friday from time almost immemorial, and it is quite likely that the women of to-day differ very little in appearance, or even dress, from their ancestors three or four hundred years ago. They are not dainty types, these Polish women, for they are short and rather heavy in build, and sometimes they carry quite heavy loads on their backs. They wear bright kerchiefs on the head, with shawls over their shoulders, rather short blue, red, or yellow skirts, and their feet were encased in heavy boots when I saw them. One pretty young girl that I saw wore a blue skirt, pink apron and green shawl. Her companion was dressed in a green skirt, pink shawl and yellow apron. Each wore a petticoat of another brilliant hue, and a handkerchief of kaleidoscopic colours on her head. The skirts are made very full, and the shawls are always folded neatly across the shoulders. On other days the old square suns itself in dignified repose.

Almost one-third of the population of Cracow are Jews, for one will find this race numerous wherever Poland once ruled. They are huddled together in the quarter known as the "Kazimierz," so named in honour of the king of that name who first invited them into the country. They live as a race apart, although they have dwelt among their Polish neighbours for several centuries. The Kazimierz is one of the sights of Cracow. The Cracow Jew can

always be recognized. He invariably wears a long, black coat, which reaches nearly to the ground, and is tightly buttoned even in July. A razor never touches his face, and he is proud of his side curls, one at each side of his temple, which he winds lovingly about his finger, anointing them frequently with copious applications of saliva. He is a living type of the ancient Jews as pictured in our illustrated Bibles, and seems to have stepped right out of the Old Testament. The women usually wear a turban made with a handkerchief. Many of the younger women would be handsome were they less ragged and a little cleaner. Their homes are small and unsanitary, but even more squalid and wretched are the Jewish villages, where the geese, pigs and babies alike play in the mud-puddles of the street.

The Cracow rabbis have been widely famed for their piety and Talmudistic learning. There are many synagogues in Cracow. Both Poles and Jews mourn a lost country, and each prays to God for the restoration of the land of his fathers. Many of these Israelites are really walking department stores. They will sell you a paper of pins, or a fur cap, and would undoubtedly undertake to smuggle you across the Russian border on a false passport. They will do anything you want done for a commission, and, if they cannot do the task themselves, will make some one else do it. They want to drive you over the city or to the Kosciuszko monument,



A CRACOW JEW.

and sometimes they almost drive you mad with their importunities.

Cracow has indeed seen much of life, and her experiences have been varied. In her youth her sons went forth to the crusades. In the fourteenth century her people are said to have numbered half a million. It is this dead spirit of the past that obtrudes itself everywhere to-day. It is seen in the narrow streets with houses turreted and needle-pointed, in the towers of the Wawel, and in the remains of the old walls that are stumbled upon here and there. The people still delight in telling the stranger of the glory that once was Poland's. That is not strange, since they have no national existence to-day, except as subjects of another nation; and they love, like the old people whose life has been lived, to recall over and over again the days of former greatness. To-day it is a city of about one hundred thousand, and seems to be fairly prosperous. Electric cars, brilliantly lighted streets, and an occasional automobile passing by give it a touch of the twentieth century. It is an Austrian fortress of the first class, and always has a garrison of several thousand soldiers stationed there. In the military scheme of that empire it is a very important outpost.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAPITAL OF POLAND'S DECAY

Founding of city — Geographical centre of Europe — Vistula River — Russian soldiers — Zamek — Stare Miasto — Ghetto — Photographing — A progressive city — Lazienki Park — Praga — Courts — Cafés — Willanow.

“ HERE is Warszawa,” said a Polish lawyer with whom I was travelling on the train from Vilna. The Russians call it Varsovie. One could readily see that a large city was near at hand, for it was evidenced in many ways. I stepped out on the platform of the imposing station as the train stopped, called a porter for my baggage, and a droshki driver soon landed me at the splendid modern Hotel Bristol, which became my home for several days.

Warsaw was founded by the Duke of Massovia in 1269. It was in the sixteenth century that the city became the capital of Poland and the residence of her kings. It was a noted seat of Polish learning and culture before the dismemberment, and, next to Paris, was looked upon as the most brilliant capital in Europe. It then had a reputation for prodigal splendour. It still is a city to which all Poles point with pride, although it is officially only a Russian provincial town. In Warsaw, as in Cracow, the Poles are thoroughly at home, and they feel

that they are the only real citizens. It may not seem possible to you, for you probably think of Warsaw as a city of Eastern Europe, but it is practically the geographical centre of the continent. It is three hundred and twenty-five miles east of Berlin, and considerably more southwest of St. Petersburg.

On arriving in Warsaw, at the present day, after having travelled through other parts of the Russian Empire, one feels as though he had left Russia behind, and is again in Western Europe. It is the real outpost of Western Europe. Here the broader gauge of the Russian railways begins. There is a cosmopolitan atmosphere about the city such as no other Russian city, not even St. Petersburg or Odessa, possesses. French seems almost like an auxiliary language, for the higher classes all speak it perfectly. The aristocratic classes frequently converse among themselves in that tongue. The Muscovite has as yet made little impression either on city or people. Although the Russian is master, he is of little consequence in the social life, for the Poles practically ostracize their overlords.

The very situation of Warsaw is striking. Approaching it from the broad Vistula River, one sees that its defences were faced towards the east, for from that direction came both Tartar and Russian. Therefore the fortifications were built on the river-bank, and commanded the valley of the Vistula. In fact the fort was built first, and the city then grew

up around it for protection. The old fortifications have disappeared, with the exception of some walls near the royal palace. The new fort where the military are stationed is situated just outside the city, but within a very convenient distance in case trouble should arise.

The Poles speak of Russia as of a foreign country, and frequently with a sort of sneer. You notice at once that without exception all the names of the streets, and all the signs on the stores, are in two languages — one Russian, and one Polish. It is simply a little element in the contest of races. You see that the corner policemen wear the same uniforms as in all other sections of Russia. You are not in Warsaw long before you see still stronger evidences of Russian sovereignty. Some of the hundred thousand or more soldiers will be seen passing through the streets. One day, when a Polish gentleman was acting as my guide, a military parade passed by. There were several regiments of infantry and cavalry, and a great many guns were noisily dragged over the rough streets.

“Look at those dirty Cossacks,” said my Polish friend, as the Cossack troops appeared, with an expression of hatred showing on his face. I looked around, and the same feeling was evident on the face of every Pole. The Cossack soldiers are recognized as cruel and unrelenting. Each man carries a long lance like one of the pikes carried by the



A RUSSIAN LIEUTENANT OF POLICE.

soldiers of Cromwell, a sword with a slight curve, a long carbine, and the cruel Cossack whip. The whip, called the *nagaika*, which they carry, has the same effect upon the Pole as a red flag upon a bull. The human probably uses more discretion than the brute, and awaits his chance to strike instead of making a blind dash, but he is aroused to equal anger.

The *nagaika* is heavy and solid, and made from twisted hide. At the butt is a loop for the wrist, and near the end is a jagged lump of lead firmly tied in the strands. Whenever there is a riot, or any sort of a political disturbance, the Cossacks ride pell-mell down the street, swinging their terrible whips toward any one who fails to get out of the way. With a single blow they can slash a face or crack a skull. The military parades, similar to the one I witnessed, are held one day each week, so I was informed. In that way the strength of the mailed hand of the government is ever kept before the people. It is no wonder that the stores do not display postcard photographs of the imperial family for sale, as no purchasers would be found among these people.

The broad and noble Vistula River divides the city from its suburb of Praga, which has seen most of the fighting about Warsaw, and it is quite an imposing stream. An old bridge almost a third of a mile in length connects these two sections. A splen-

did new bridge has just recently been completed, and it was a much needed improvement. During the open season many boats of small size pass up and down the river, and the carrying trade is of considerable importance. It was of even greater importance in the olden days when the Vistula was all within Polish territory, and a boat could go from Cracow to its mouth without passing a foreign custom-house.

On the Warsaw side of the Vistula, and right at the approach to the old bridge, stands the old royal castle, known as the Zamek. This was once the official residence of the Polish kings, but it is now the living-quarters of the Russian governor-general. It was mostly built by Sigismund III, who is represented in a bronze statue on a lofty pillar in the square opposite the entrance. The inscription shows that it was erected by his son Wladislas IV. The inscription further calls attention to the fact that during his reign Moscow was captured by the Poles, and Wladislas was proclaimed Czar of Muscovy. This was just before the first Romanov was placed upon the throne of Russia.

Wladislas's rule did not last long, however, because he was a Roman Catholic, which made a religious as well as racial objection to him. If one goes to Moscow he can see in the Red Square, facing the Kremlin, one of the most sacred spots in that holy city, a monument to Minine, the butcher of

Nijni Novgorod, who headed a popular movement similar to that led by Joan of Arc. Upon the monument is an inscription stating that he and other patriots saved Russia from the Poles. Thus it is that one picks up the threads of history in travelling about. On this square facing the Zamek hundreds of Poles have been killed during the several insurrections against Russian rule. In 1863 Russian soldiers camped here and fired at kneeling and unresisting Poles as they sang the national hymn.

Only a few relics of the days of Polish rule are still left, for the government does not wish to leave anything that will foster the spirit of patriotism. It is for this reason that relics sacred to the Poles were removed to a museum in Moscow, and much of the university library transferred to St. Petersburg. It is for the same reason that it has always refused permission for the erection of a statue or any other memorial to the patriot Kosciuszko. Monuments to other noted Poles are permitted. A statue to Copernicus, unveiled in 1830, is one of the oldest statues now standing in the city. It was erected by a national subscription among the Poles. In the same way a memorial was raised to the poet Mieczkiewicz.

The ancient town of Warsaw centres around the old market, the Stare Miasto, which is not far from the Zamek. Here are quaint old narrow and lofty houses, with curious carvings on the façades, which

have changed but little in several centuries. The buildings look like the old guild houses that will be found in many cities of Europe. They are narrow, and for that reason five or six stories makes them look very tall. The square resembles somewhat the Faubourg St. Antoine quarter of Paris. In the old wine-shops around this square the Poles in the olden days used to drink the *miod* (mead) so loved by them, and their descendants sip that favourite liquor in the same establishments to this day. It is still a market-place, although it has been overshadowed by the new market. Vendors of vegetables, traffickers in kitchen utensils, and the dealers in old clothes monopolize the space. Disputes over a few kopecks may be heard on every side, for it is the poor who purchase here. Crowds of Poles and Jews pass in and out at all times, and they afford an interesting study of racial characteristics.

In the old city will also be found the Ghetto, which is probably the most miserable of all. It is such a contrast to the bright and beautiful quarters of the newer city, where enterprise and prosperity show up on all sides. Many of the streets are extremely narrow, and the narrowness of the thoroughfares cuts out most of the sunlight. Undecipherable Hebrew hieroglyphics will be seen over the doors of the little stores. Some of the streets are more like little lanes or passageways, but they are intended to take the place of streets. Hundreds



STATUE OF COPERNICUS, WARSAW.

of individuals live in little courts back from the streets, which are so dilapidated that they ought to be torn down.

The congestion has become much worse in the last two decades, since the systematic expulsions of the Jews from the cities outside the Pale. You see a little passageway, pass through it, and enter one of these courts. Children fairly swarm in them, and from the windows above you men, women and more children will be seen. One wonders where they find enough bedrooms to sleep in, without taking into consideration the matter of living-quarters. At least one-third of the eight hundred thousand population are members of this race. They are almost wholly interested in barter and trade, and hundreds will be seen at any time standing around and waiting for an odd job. One sees very few of them actually engaged in any sort of manual employment, although there are a great many Jewish artisans here. The cleanliness and neatness of the Ghetto dwellers cannot be recommended, for these qualities are most conspicuous by their absence. As a matter of fact the Jews have been oppressed and persecuted so much in Russia that their better characteristics have been almost wholly suppressed.

“ You will be arrested,” was the parting warning of the hotel porter, as I left the Bristol one morning, camera in hand. He wanted me to apply to the police department for a permit. But I knew

the delay involved in such an action, and decided to take a chance. I had secured permits in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and never had occasion to use them except as an interesting souvenir to show to friends. I left the soldiers and fort alone, and so was not interfered with. No inquisitive officer even asked me if I had a permit. Had he done so, half a rouble would undoubtedly have caused him to experience a wonderful lapse of memory.

In attempting to secure some photographs in the Ghetto, however, I had some amusing experiences. Every one seemed to be perfectly willing to become a subject. At one time I had an interesting group of a half-dozen subjects posed along the street, but others began to run in from every direction. There was so much movement that I could not take the photograph, for no fewer than a hundred had gathered in the group, and others were still coming. I started away, fearing that such a crowd would excite the curiosity of a policeman, and remembering that I had not secured the photographing permit. A crowd of small boys followed me, interested, as boys always are, in seeing what might be done. I could not get rid of them, so I jumped on a passing street-car and made my escape. All of the Ghetto population seemed perfectly willing to have their photographs taken at any time.

The Warsaw of to-day has become an important industrial city. Everywhere are signs of enter-



THE STARE MIASTO, WARSAW.

prise. The smoke from the many chimneys indicates extensive manufacturing, and has taken the place of the smoke of gunpowder, at least temporarily. The Poles make good workmen, so the manufacturers say, and there is always an abundance of labour to be had from among the millions of agricultural peasants. Lodz, not far distant from Warsaw, is a formidable rival. It has grown from an unimportant place to a city of four hundred thousand in a quarter of a century. Thousands of spindles are now turning out cotton goods, the most of which goes to other parts of Russia.

The newer Warsaw is a beautiful city. It is enterprising, too, and the clerks in the stores can address you in French and German, as well as in Russian and Polish. The stores are very attractive. Splendid streets and beautiful parks abound. There are many fine apartment buildings of six or eight stories, the finest that may be found in Russia, and they are not greatly unlike many similar structures which may be seen in American cities. All of the better homes have a bright and cheerful look which one does not expect to find, and remind one very much of Paris or Vienna.

Only a block or two from the centre of the city is a fine park filled with noble trees and beds of flowers. Above the trees, however, glisten the gilded domes of the magnificent new cathedral, which was dedicated by the Russians in 1912. It

was built at an expense of several millions of dollars, the greater part of which was supplied by the Holy Synod. The boulevards furnish excellent drives for the Varsovians, and many elegant equipages will be seen. In them will be seated finely gowned women and aristocratic-looking men, and the demi-monde will not be missing. Near the end of the main street are two other parks, which will compare with almost any similar pleasure-grounds in Europe. One of these is the Saski Ogród, or the Saxon Gardens, which is a favourite resort both winter and summer. It is a delightful combination of groves, flower-beds and little lakes. On a fine Sunday afternoon in summer the paths are fairly thronged with the crowds of promenaders. Children with their grown-up guardians are numerous, for the supply of youngsters in Poland is still plentiful. The other beautiful park is the Łazienki.

The Łazienki was at one time a royal park. In it is an attractive palace, and an open-air stone amphitheatre seating one thousand persons, modelled after those of ancient Greece. It was remodelled by the past Polish king, and also by Alexander I of Russia. The last king, Stanislaus, used to have about him a gay company of poets, wits and fair ladies in the Łazienki. Attired as shepherdesses or goddesses, these ladies would flit about the grounds, promenade with him, or boat with him on the little lake. Whole bands of peasant girls would be gath-

ered to sing their popular songs, and dance the national dances for his amusement. It was indeed a butterfly court that lived here, and its morality will not stand close investigation. Lazienki is still crown property.

There is also a park on the Praga side, which is the resort of the bourgeoisie, the common people, on Sunday. Here are side shows, merry-go-rounds, swings, and all sorts of amusements or games. Cakes, candies, fruits, and mild drinks are sold, but no alcoholic liquors. This resort is fostered by the imperial government in an effort to minimize the effects of alcohol. There are many dancing pavilions, and all, from the peasant girls to the soldiers in their shining top-boots, seem to enjoy this pastime. It is an interesting picture of Warsaw life that is presented in this park.

Along the principal streets are a number of palaces of the nobility, which were once centres of the life of the Polish aristocrats. Many of them are really magnificent mansions, worthy of royalty itself. Some of them are still occupied by descendants of the oldest families; others have been appropriated by the government for its use. The courts are held in these expropriated palaces, one of them being the old Krasinski Palace. I visited the courts of the First Instance and Second Instance in company with a Polish lawyer, who explained the procedure to me. No one is admitted to the bar

until he can pass his examination in the Russian language. He must wear the uniform prescribed for Russian courts. In each court sat three judges in semi-military uniforms, with a holy icon of the Orthodox Church above them. A room is maintained for the exclusive use of a priest to administer oaths. All of these judges were Russians, who did not understand the Polish language. An official interpreter translated the testimony of the witnesses into Russian for the benefit of the judges. It is easy to see how ill feeling might grow up from the conduct of the courts alone.

A number of the churches, which are now resplendent with gilded domes and the triple cross, were formerly Polish Catholic churches. They were likewise appropriated, and this has caused ill feeling. The religious atmosphere is just as noticeable here as in Cracow, and there are many worshippers in the churches. Sometimes they will be seen lying prostrate on the floors. There is no church, however, that will compare with the Wawel Cathedral. The Warsaw Cathedral is in the old town, wedged in by old buildings, so that it does not attract the attention of a visitor. It was originally founded in the thirteenth century, but has been rebuilt. In it are buried many nobles and former dignitaries of Poland. Its decorations are of the usual gaudy and rather overdone style.

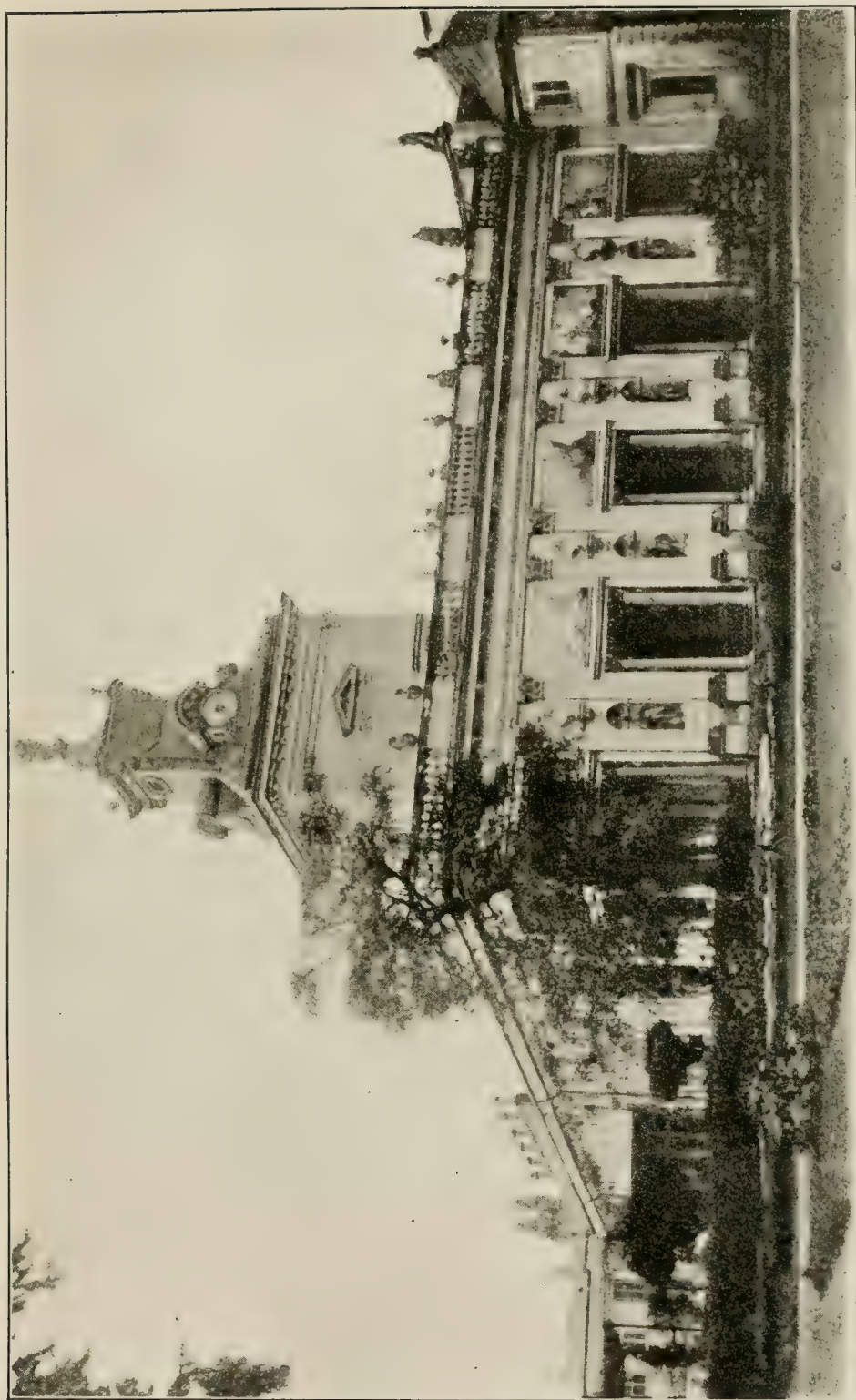
The many cafes, or *cukiernias*, remind one of

Paris, for the tables are set out in the streets. They exist by the dozen. Groups of people seat themselves at the tables while they drink tea and munch the delicious Warsaw cakes. The Poles drink their full share of alcoholic liquors, also, and plenty of places for its purchase will be found. Nearly every restaurant has its little band of musicians, who play at certain hours. At night all of them are filled with convivial crowds, and life is far from dull. One of the most noticeable characteristics of the Poles is their love of music. It is almost like travelling in Italy, for music will be heard everywhere. If the Polish youth has nothing else in the way of a musical instrument, he will play the accordion, the jewsharp, or mouth-organ. In every way there is a lightness and vivacity to the Polish character in this, their home city, which one does not expect to find. The sole aim of a large percentage of the citizens seems to be that of amusing themselves. One should enjoy good music and acting in order thoroughly to appreciate Warsaw. One of the busiest places is known as the Krakowskie Przedmiescie, where the churches, newspaper offices, hotels, and a number of public buildings are centred. At night this is a centre of life and brilliantly illuminated. Droshkis and taxicabs dart back and forth as careless of the danger to pedestrians as they are on Broadway.

A curious little railway carries the traveller a

few miles from Warsaw, out across carefully cultivated level fields watched over by little shrines dedicated to favourite saints, to the diminutive, thatched-roofed village of Willanow — the *w* being pronounced like *v*. It was on this plain where the Vola used to assemble. As many as one hundred and fifty thousand Polish nobles have gathered here during disputed elections, so it is said. In the midst of the plain two enclosures were made, one for the Senate and one for the nuncios. The proceedings were always opened by mass in the old cathedral, and then the procession proceeded to the plain. In the city all the shops were closed, and many barred their windows. The streets would be filled with brilliantly uniformed troops, palatines, castellans and dignitaries, who fairly blazed with ecclesiastical and other decorations. Vast tents were erected, and thousands of horses were stabled round about.

Willanow was the beautiful country home of John Sobieski (John III), by whom it was so remodelled as to be almost rebuilt. It is a magnificent building, a white quadrangle of stone, not so large as the average royal palace, but beautiful in miniature, and set in the midst of a landscape skirted with water, decorated with gardens, and modelled after that of Schönbrunn at Vienna. The park is said to have been Sobieski's own planning. Beautiful avenues of trees lead from every direction toward



THE PALACE OF WILLANOW.

the palace, which is approached by a terrace. It was built mostly by the labour of Turkish captives, who were brought back by Sobieski after his victory at Vienna.

The outside walls of Willanow are decorated with statues at every available point and with many really creditable paintings, much after the style of some Italian villas, the scenes of which represent the victories of Sobieski. It may be said, however, that they were put on by his successor, and not by himself. The whole palace is built after the models of Italian artists. The rooms, many of which are stately, are maintained much as they were by that man. They are decorated with portraits and cabinets, many of the portraits being of his wife. Several rooms are prettily decorated with Chinese curiosities and in Chinese taste. There is the little chapel in which Sobieski said his prayers each morning, and there are the apartments of his vain French spouse, to whom was due much of the unhappiness of his reign. He did not have peace in his rule, because of the jealousy of the nobles, and he had no more peace at home, because of the brawls of his revengeful wife. The art gallery has a number of copies of works of famous artists, but few originals. Much of the furnishing is the original furniture used by that monarch. On the green sward in front of the palace, and near the attractive church, stands a great and imposing Gothic tomb

of the Potocki. The family which owns Willanow at the present time — the Branickas — occupy the palace but seldom, and it is preserved for the benefit of those who may wish to visit it.

CHAPTER XIII

GERMANY AND HER POLISH SUBJECTS

Routes — Thorn — Agricultural prosperity — Gnesen — Posen — Imperial Palace — Rathaus — The Reichstag — Polish paintings — Dislike of Slav — Suppression of language — Bismarck — Pan-Germanism — Colonization Commission — Petty regulations.

THERE are two through routes between Berlin and St. Petersburg. One passes through Königsburg, and the other runs through Posen and Warsaw. Königsburg is a city with much history. At one time a stronghold of the Teutonic Knights, it became subject to Poland. At a later period it became the capital of Prussia and the residence of the Elector of Brandenburg. To-day much of the city is mediæval, and a visitor can spend a day pleasantly in viewing the sights to be seen.

By whichever route one goes the traveller between Russia and Germany knows when the boundary line of the two empires is reached, for plenty of soldiers will be found on either side. As my train left Alexandrovo, the last station in Russia, after the passports had been examined, the doors of the train were locked, and they were not again opened until the German border was passed. Until the train started, guards patrolled the track on either side of the coaches in order to see that none got on except

those whose passports were in proper form, for it is necessary to get a special permit on leaving the country. The first stop on the German side is the town of Thorn, which figures many times in Polish history. It was here that Copernicus, the famous astronomer, was born. Thorn is in the province of Bromberg, for thus has the original Polish name of Bydgosze been Germanized. Thorn has little of general interest to-day, but it is a thriving town and an important railroad centre of some thirty thousand persons.

The better agricultural conditions in German Poland at once become manifest. The land is level and carefully cultivated. The little thatched cottages look better; the surroundings seem cleaner and more attractive. Red tiles have replaced the thatched roofs on the other side of the international line, but the picturesque windmills and antiquated well-sweeps still remain. Good roads have replaced the tortuous highways of Russia, and the train speeds over the iron rails at a much greater speed. The names of the stations appear only in German. The peasants that one sees are still Slavs, however, and not Teutons, and one knows that he is still in Poland.

A short ride on the comfortable German train brings one to the old city of Gnesen, so noted in Polish annals. Through being made the headquarters of the Church, Gnesen (Gnieszno in Polish), has

been termed the first capital of Poland. This city, said to be the oldest town in Poland, lies a little northeast of Posen. It is a city of about twenty-five thousand people, in the German government of Bromberg. Down to the beginning of the fourteenth century the Polish kings were crowned in this city, in order that the ceremony might be conducted by the archbishop, and in the cathedral church was laid the body of St. Adalbert.

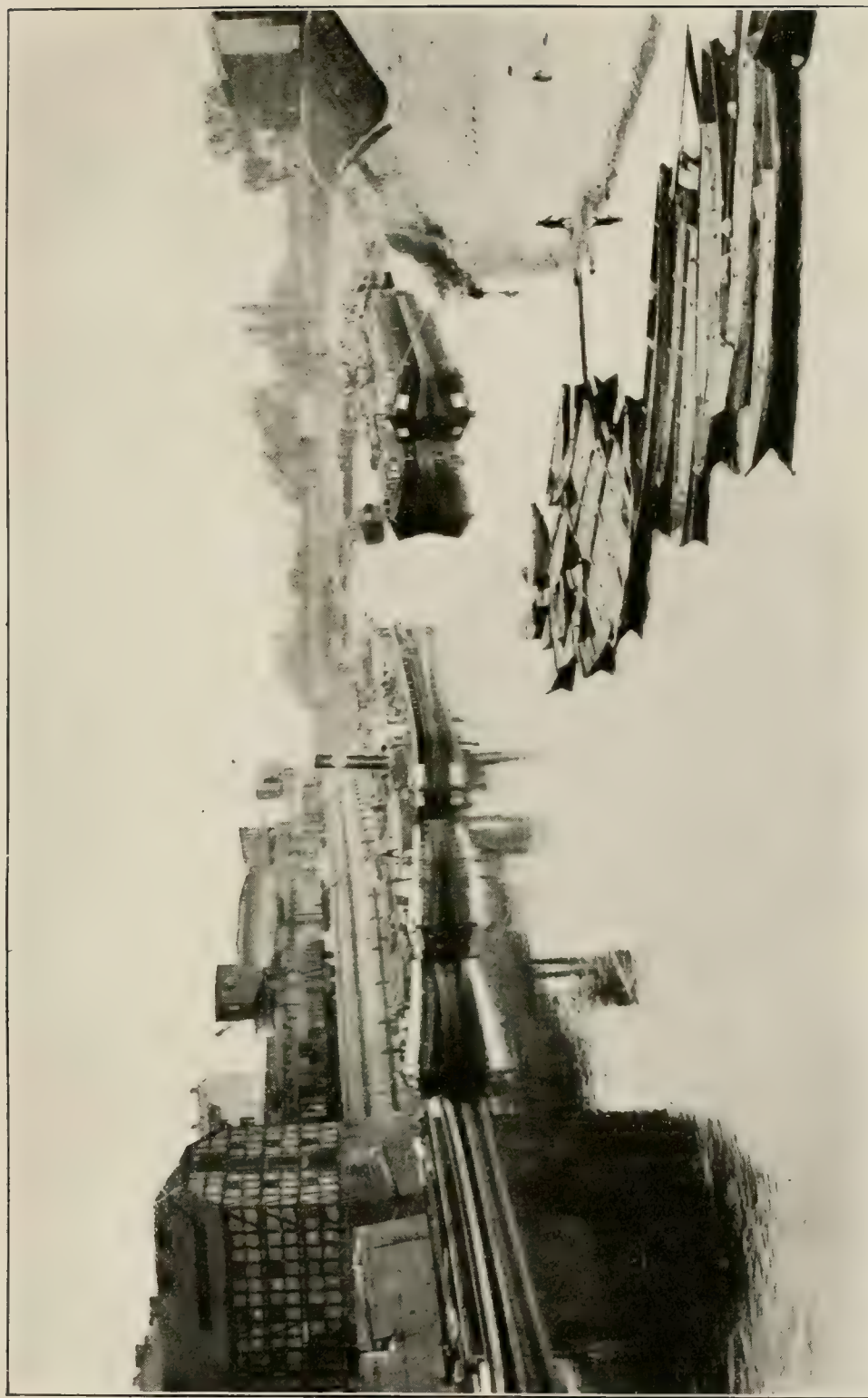
Posen, or Posnan, as it is in Polish, however, might even with greater reason be called the first capital of Poland, for Mieczyslaw, Boleslaw, and several of the later kings made it their home, and are buried in the cathedral in this city. It is likewise a very old town, and only about fifty miles from the Russian border in a direct line. At the present time it is one of the strongest military centres in the German Empire, and the city has been very much Germanized. For centuries Posen was an important place in the overland trade between Europe and Asia. Of the population, approaching one hundred and fifty thousand, probably one-half are German, and only about one-twentieth are Jews. It will thus be seen that this race is much less numerous here than in Cracow or Warsaw, the other chief Polish cities. The Posen Jews do not dress with the same peculiarities, either, but follow the costumes of their neighbours.

Posen is a fortress of the first rank, and there is

usually a garrison of ten thousand or more soldiers stationed there. It is situated at the confluence of the Cybina and Warathe rivers. Considerable commerce is carried on these rivers, although the water is not deep enough for vessels of any great size. The newer part of Posen, which has been erected since this province fell to Prussia in the partition of 1793, has decidedly Germanized characteristics. In fact, in the newer part it could not be distinguished from any other German city. This change has all been wrought since Napoleon closed his career as map adjuster of Europe.

There is an appearance of industry about the city of Posen, and prosperity is evident on all sides. In fact, from an economic standpoint, all of German Poland has prospered. One of the most striking features of Posen is the new royal palace completed only a few years ago, but which has never yet been occupied by Wilhelm II. It was built in order to attach the Poles to the person of the emperor by establishing one of his residences here, but as yet it has not succeeded in accomplishing this end. His residences are so numerous that it is almost impossible to occupy them all, and then, so it is said, he is rather afraid to live among his Polish subjects. But I do not believe that either cowardice or timidity can ever be charged to the present head of the Brandenburg dynasty.

It is quite a long drive from the station in Posen



RIVER SCENE, POSEN.

to the city, past the royal palace and other imposing public buildings. All public signs appear only in German, which shows the ruthless attempt to denationalize everything Polish.

“ How does it come that all street signs are in German? ” I asked a merchant in Posen.

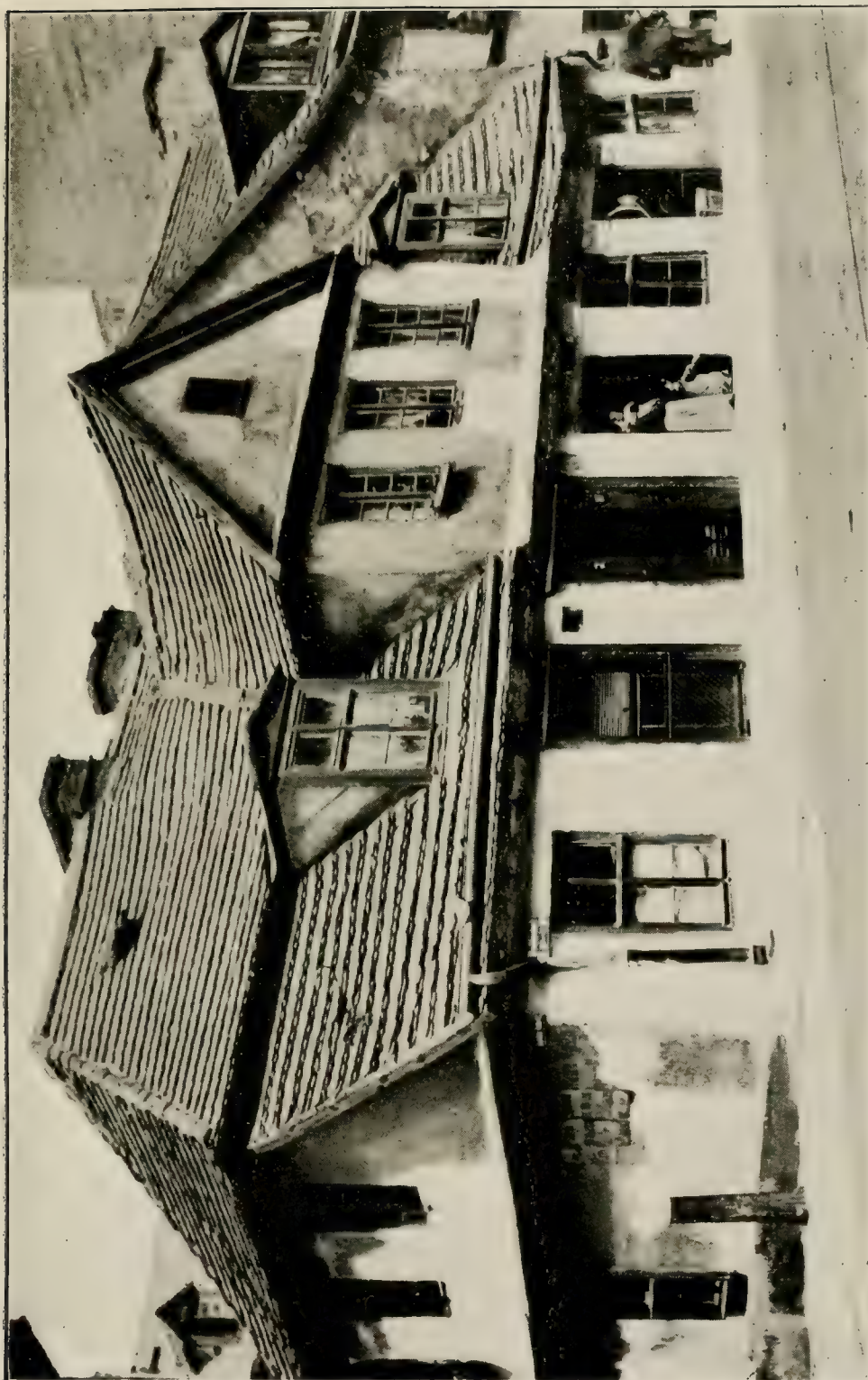
“ The government will not allow us to use Polish,” he answered. This is going further than autocratic Russia.

I could hardly believe that this was really the old Polish city of Posen at first, until a tour of investigation led me down to the older part of the municipality. A great fire a century ago destroyed the greater part of the city, and this accounts for the changed appearance. The rebuilt sections were thoroughly stamped with the German individuality. The Polish characteristics can be seen to the best advantage in the older part of the city around the *Alte Markt*, the old market, the buildings of which date back several centuries. The appearance is very similar to the *Stare Miasto* in Warsaw. The *Rathaus* is a Gothic Renaissance building, constructed in 1536, after designs by an Italian architect. Its tower is more than two hundred feet high, and it is really a very attractive building. It has just been thoroughly remodelled and renovated. In front of the *Rathaus* is a pillory of 1535, and a fountain which is very old.

The names on the business places in this part of

the city are almost wholly Polish, as the business is nearly all conducted by that nationality or Polish Jews. Poles of the poorer class dwell in the suburbs of Walleschei and Schwedka. Polish women wearing the full skirts so characteristic of them will be seen going to and fro from the markets, carrying their baskets or bundles of produce or trade. In appearance they are just the same as you might see in Cracow or Warsaw. There are many churches in Posen, and they have plenty of worshippers during the hours of service. One commendable feature is that school buildings are more noticeable than in either the Russian or Austrian sections of that ancient kingdom.

It is now almost two decades more than a century since the last partition of Poland, which at one time reached within eighty miles of Berlin. There is still a Polish question to be reckoned with. There is not a meeting of the Reichstag in which the subject does not arise in some form. It is to some extent the racial antagonism of the Teuton and the Slav. A boundary of seven hundred and fifty miles of plains with no natural obstructions exists between Russia and Germany, and the nearest point is less than two hundred miles from Berlin. A chain of fortresses has been established near this line. The Poles console themselves sometimes by going to Cracow and looking upon the painting by the Polish artist, Jan Matejko, entitled "The Prussian Hom-



AN ANCIENT HOUSE, POSEN.

age." It represents the envoys of Prussia as yielding obeisance to Sigismund I, and brings to their minds the fact that Prussia once acknowledged the sovereignty of Poland.

There is also another painting by the same artist, of the Battle of Grünwald in Cracow, portraying a famous victory over the Teutonic Knights in 1410. Prussia had become so downtrodden by the military oligarchy of these Knights, who, as power came to them, prostituted the very name of Christianity, that the Prussians begged their more powerful neighbours to assist them in breaking the bondage. Religion with that order was simply a convenient cloak to shield a corrupt and rapacious government. These paintings also vividly show to one not a Pole the one-time vastly superior position of Poland over the Prussia of five centuries ago.

There are about four million Poles who are German subjects, but not Germans in any sense of the word. The fear or hatred of Russia appears in the treatment of the Poles. They are looked upon as the vanguard of the powerful Slav race, with whom the German believes the Teuton will eventually have to fight for world supremacy. Therefore the Poles must be subdued and assimilated. Because only German names and official proclamations are seen throughout Eastern Germany, does not mean that the people are German. One can tell this by listening to any groups that he may see talking in Thorn,

or Posen, or Dantzic. This last named city, once the principal port of Poland, has been more completely nationalized than the others, because its commercial importance has brought in a great influx of Germans from other parts of the empire.

Prussia spared no effort to Germanize her Polish provinces from the very beginning of her sovereignty, and the original Prussia has become the modern Germany. It began vigorously in 1830, and gained a fresh impetus with the consolidation of the various states into the German Empire. Her plans include the wiping out of the Polish language and introducing German settlers. This scheme originated in the fertile brain of Bismarck, whose austere countenance looks down from a lofty pedestal on the people of Posen. It was only one of the many schemes of that ambitious statesman to create a yet more powerful Germany. William II has proved no impotent successor in that policy, and the building up of German solidarity has gone steadily on. Prince Von Bulow has declared that the Polish question is the most vitally important one in German home politics.

The ambition of modern Germany is boundless, and the unfortunate Poles have been caught in this maelstrom. Germany still hopes for the final disintegration of Austria, and the uniting of Vienna and the Austrian German provinces to a still greater Germany. This would add eight or ten more mil-



THE RATHAUS, POSEN.

lions of German-speaking inhabitants. Many of these Austrian Germans openly refer to Germany as the Fatherland. The hopes of the Pan-Germanic School include the Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Dutch, Swiss, and all other nationalities of Teutonic origin. They dream of a future German Empire that will reach from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic, with a Hohenzollern ruler on the throne. This gives an idea of what is meant by Pan-Germanism.

But Russia is ambitious, also, and is pursuing a Russification policy, in which Germans have been made to feel the sting of an unyielding autocracy as well. The Russian provinces of Livonia, Courland, Esthonia, and Kovno, on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland, which are known as the Baltic Provinces, are strongly German. In the counting-houses, in the exchange, on the quays, and in all places of business in such cities as Riga, Reval, Libau, Mittau, and Dorpat, the guttural German will be heard far more than the high-keyed Russian inflection. The names on the sign-boards of the business places show the Teutonic origin of the proprietors. The rathaus and domkirche will be found in every town. The Hanseatic League was responsible for the Germanization. The German language is now under the ban in the schools of those provinces, and the University of Dorpat, an ancient centre of German culture, has been Russified. Germany has protested, but her protests have been

about as availing as those of the Poles living in German territory.

Large tracts of land were bought in the Polish provinces by money appropriated from the German imperial treasury. This is sold to German settlers from other parts of the empire. Some of the Polish landlords have been induced, either by their poverty or high prices, to dispose of their holdings. The Colonization Commission was first established in 1886, with an appropriation of twenty million dollars, and up to the present time more than a hundred millions have been spent. Big prices were paid, but much of the land was bought of thrifty Teutons who saw a good chance to unload. The Commission explained this by saying that otherwise the land would have fallen into the hands of the Poles, who had formed a protective society to counteract the efforts of the Colonization Commission. So far, even after a generation of persistent effort, the number of German settlers thus introduced has been comparatively small. The anti-Polish move has already cost the government a great deal of money, and the results have not been satisfactory. Compulsory expropriation is now advocated by the supporters of the Colonization Commission in the Reichstag.

The main effect of the government effort has been a great improvement in agriculture. The German settlers find themselves ostracized and boycotted by

their Polish neighbours. Their incoming has greatly intensified the nationalist feeling among the Poles. The Polish nobles, who have sold their lands, have simply gone to the neighbouring towns and entered commerce in some form, and have thus not been eliminated from the problem. In material development one can find no fault with Germany's rule, for trade has advanced by leaps and bounds. But Germany seems to treat her Polish subjects as though they were in some way inferior to the Teutons. This is one of the exasperations the Poles have to endure. The birth rate among the Poles is still larger than among their German neighbours.

There is a law forbidding the use of Polish in public meetings. Polish children must attend schools where only German is taught, but the priests privately teach them at home where it is possible. The government has taken entire charge of the schools. At first religious instruction was left to the priests, but even this has been generally superseded. In one place, a few years ago, a number of children were ordered to be caned because they refused to recite the catechism in German. The parents indignantly invaded the schoolhouse, and attempted to prevent the punishment. A score of them were sentenced to imprisonment for varying lengths. There was great excitement throughout all Poland, and hostile demonstrations took place before the German consulates in Warsaw and Lem-

berg. The matter is not settled yet, and children frequently refuse to answer catechism questions in German.

Only Germans are appointed to offices, and Polish recruits are sent to distant provinces. Letters must be addressed in German, or they will not be delivered. Mixed marriages are discouraged. "Experience teaches," said Bismarck, "that a Polish wife makes her husband a Polish patriot in the twinkling of an eye." One result has been an intensification of the feeling of Polish nationality. They would almost welcome the Pan-Slav idea as fostered by Russian statesmen. These things are bound to have some effect in the end, for the children only learn German words for modern inventions, but it is a slow and really cruel process. It is likewise just as much contrary to promises made at the time of partition as is the conduct of Russia, for the Prussian king guaranteed the free use of language, schools and a degree of self-government.

"Your language," said Frederick William III at Vienna, in 1815, "shall be used together with the German in all public transactions." With this promise he obligated both himself and his successors.

Germany should be gratified that her Polish subjects have never taken up arms vigorously against her rule, and little German blood has been spilled in maintaining order. It is true that there was a revolt

at Posen in 1848, but revolution was rife all over Germany in that year. Tens of thousands of pure Germans migrated to Brazil and North America as a result of the disturbances of that period, and the Poles were no worse than the Teutons themselves. The armed resistance of the German Poles has been little as compared with that of their brethren in Russia.

CHAPTER XIV

AUSTRIA AND HER POLISH SUBJECTS

Galicia — Ruthenians — Austria-Hungary — Mixture of races — Many religions — Pan-Slavism — Agricultural poverty — Wieliczka — An underground city of salt — Polish freedom — Lemberg — Passports.

AUSTRIAN POLAND is contained in the province known as Galicia (pronounced as if spelled Galitzia) which contains thirty thousand square miles, making it a little smaller than the state of Indiana. In this province there are about eight million of people, of whom the Poles constitute a little more than one-half. Although this province was united to Poland in the fourteenth century, it has never been thoroughly Polonized. In the eastern portion, around Lemberg, the Ruthenians are almost as numerous as the Poles. The Ruthenians are of the same nationality as the Little Russians of the Russian Empire.

There is not always the best of feeling between the two elements in this section of Austria. The Poles are the best organized faction, and practically rule the province. In the local Diet of one hundred and sixty-one members, the Ruthenians only elect about one-tenth of the representation, although they number fully three-sevenths of the population. This



RUTHENIAN PEASANT GIRLS, AND THEIR FOREMAN, GALICIA.

legislative body has the greatest degree of autonomy of any local assemblies of Austria. The Poles elect nearly all the representatives to the Reichsrath at Vienna as well. In that immiscible national Parliament of the strange mosaic of nations known as Austria-Hungary, the Poles with about eighty votes have frequently held the balance of power. One Polish noble has even held the position of premier of the empire.

Austria-Hungary is a curious conglomeration of races and nationalities — Slav, Teuton, Latin, and Mongolian. The Slavs are by far the strongest element, but they are divided into a number of groups more or less antagonistic among themselves. There is a pan-Slav school which aims to unite all the members of this nationality. With the exception of the wedge of Hungarians, the Slavs are fairly compact in Eastern Europe. The greater part of European Turkey is inhabited by Slavs. In Austria the Slavs include the Poles, Czechs, Ruthenians, Croats, Servians and Slovenians. Pan-Slavism, however, has not such a strong focusing point as pan-Germanism, for the autocratic government of Russia does not attract as does Germany; nor, on the other hand, does the Slav nature lend itself so readily to discipline and cohesion as the Teutonic nature.

There is no Austrian language, no Austrian literature, no Austrian race or patriotism; and about the only element of cohesion that exists is a loyalty

to the emperor, Franz Joseph, and the Hapsburg family. Whether it will continue to the succeeding members of that family upon the death of the present emperor, the future alone will divulge. The Hungarians are of Mongolian origin, and are the strongest single element in Austria-Hungary. Next come the Germans, and in their order would probably follow Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, Servians, Croatians, Slovenians, Jews and Italians. In the Reichsrath it is said that twenty-one different languages are spoken by the members. The racial antagonism has frequently exhibited itself in violent scenes in this national assembly, in which blood has been shed on more than one occasion.

In the matter of religion, also, there is almost as great commixtion as in language and race, although Austria-Hungary is considered the greatest Roman Catholic power in the world. By its constitution the ruling dynasty must profess that faith. Vast wealth is in the hands of the Church, which is among the largest of the landed proprietors. The greater part of the soil along the Danube is owned by that religious body. We must remember, however, that the Reformation really began at Prague with John Huss, and the term Moravia is almost synonymous with Protestantism. Hence there are millions of those who profess the Orthodox, Armenian, Lutheran, Calvinist, Jewish and other faiths living in this empire, and even Mohammedanism is well rep-

resented. It is no wonder that races with such divergent origin and religious faith have never mingled; that each one has jealously guarded its own nationality, and lived its own life. The things most feared by the Austrian ruling family are Pan-Slavism, as fostered by Russia, and Pan-Germanism, as represented by aggressive modern Germany.

Galicia is probably the poorest province of old Poland. Agricultural prosperity can easily be seen in the Polish provinces of Russia and Germany, but Galicia looks terribly poor. The exhaustion of generations of war has undoubtedly contributed to this condition, but it was not so favourably endowed by nature. There is a fairly level plain region about Cracow, but it becomes more rolling as Lemberg is approached. All kinds of grain and vegetables grow in this soil. There are also some rich petroleum wells, and the famous old salt mines of Wieliczka, only a few miles from Cracow, which have been worked for more than eight hundred years and still yield abundantly.

The salt mines of Wieliczka are known to have been worked as far back as 1252, and no one knows how much longer. At one time they were one of the principal sources of revenue to the Polish kings. These hundreds of years of excavations have honey-combed out of the solid salt crust an underground city of rock salt. No railroad is permitted to run near them for fear that the vibrations will cause

disaster. There is an intricate congerie of winding streets and dim alleys. In them will be found pillared churches, staircases, restaurants, shrines, statues, monuments, a central railroad station for the little narrow gauge railway, and a thousand other wonders.

Access to the Wieliczka salt mine is not easy, for the government is watchful, and the workmen themselves are searched each night when they leave as carefully as if all the crystals were diamonds. The entrance is through a long, low building, in which are located the administration offices. Elevators take one down to the abyss, or one may descend by staircases, which for the great part are cut out of solid salt. The religious nature of the Polish workmen is shown in the salt-hewn cathedral of St. Anthony, which dates from the seventeenth century, and is the work of pious workmen. Salt-hewn statues of St. Stanislaus and St. Clement will be found here, and there is a salt crucifix and a salt pulpit. In other parts of this underground city there are also small chapels in which there are many sacred objects carved out of the salt.

The largest chamber in this subterranean city is the ball-room, which is some three hundred feet long, with an arched roof that is one hundred and ninety feet high in the highest place. There is a chandelier containing a couple of hundred candles, which is made of salt crystals hung together by wire. When

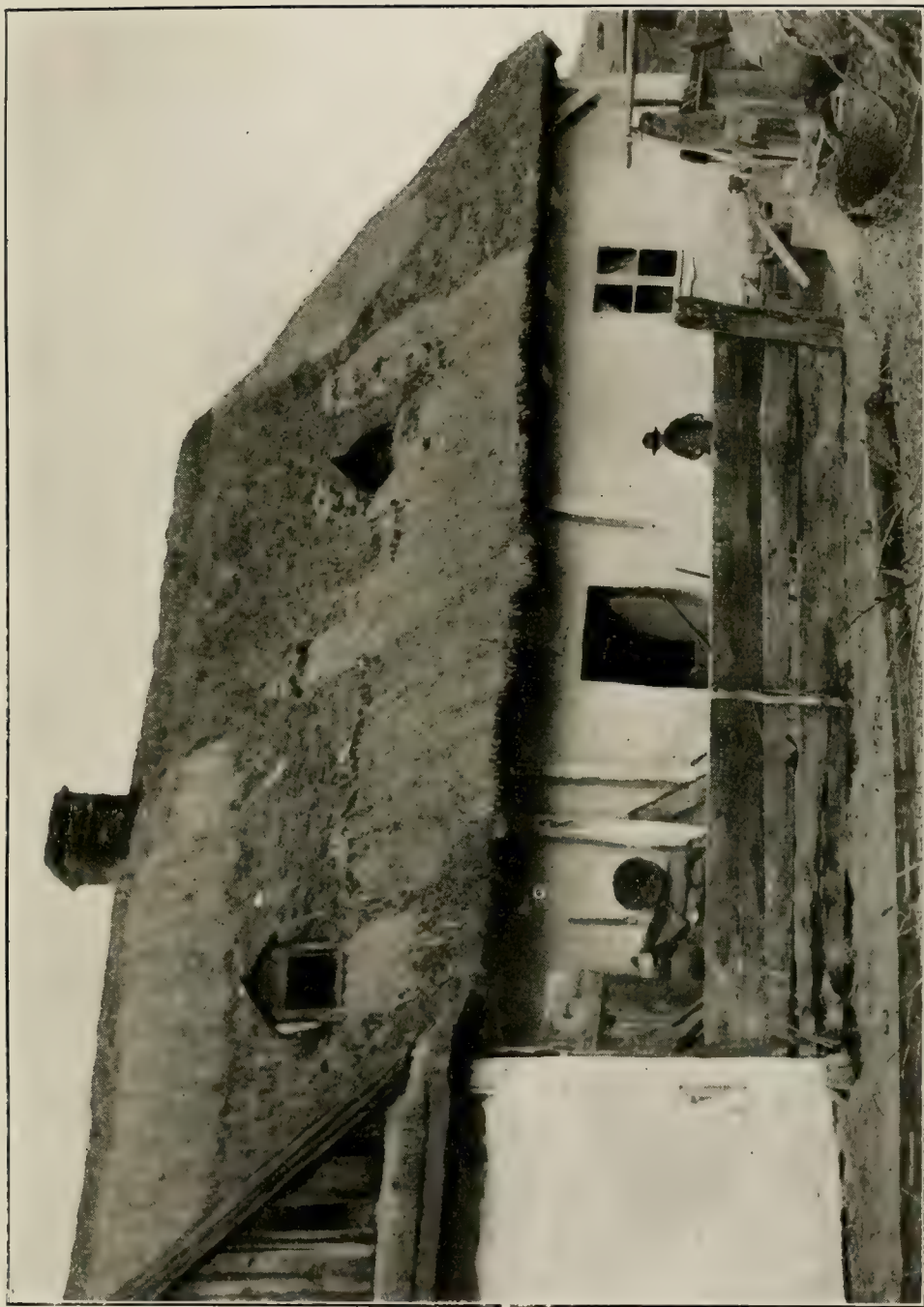
the lights are lit the salt walls glisten, and the crystals flash many rays of colours. Entrance to the ball-room is through a triumphal archway, also of salt. Whenever a new "street" is opened, the event is celebrated by a ball in this room. Then hundreds of Galician peasants make merry with their dances. A number of members of the royal family of Austria have visited these underground chambers, and the Czar Alexander I also visited them.

Some two thousand workmen, employed in eight-hour shifts, are constantly engaged in excavating rock salt. As a rule it is said that they are short-lived, since the atmosphere seems to have a bad effect upon health in general. The men do not seem unhappy, however, although wages as a rule do not exceed about twenty cents a day. Accidents have happened on numerous occasions. Some of them have been through fires breaking out in the timbers which are used as supports; at other times masses of salt rock, sometimes weighing several tons, have fallen and wrought havoc; on a few occasions the waters in the salt lakes have risen in some unaccountable way and drowned the workmen. These little lakes, in which the saline water is ordinarily from twenty to thirty feet deep, are navigated by ferry boats. Little trolley cars are drawn over the tracks by ponies, many of which have never seen daylight, and are born blind. In the central station

there is a café and restaurant where the people can dine and drink as much as they wish.

Polish hopes of nationality cluster around Galicia. This is because it is the only section where the Poles are still allowed to develop and rule themselves with very little interference from the governing power. It is the only portion of the old commonwealth where the Poles can breathe freely, speak their own language without fear, and openly educate their children in the beloved tongue. The Poles do practically as they desire, so long as they render the military service demanded of them, and pay the taxes assessed. Austria does nothing to try to stamp out the Polish language or customs as do her neighbours, Russia and Germany, with their Polish population. Warsaw merchants are obliged to employ at least one Russian clerk. Germany will not forward letters bearing Polish titles. As a consequence a real affection has grown up among the Poles for the aged Franz Joseph.

Literature of all kinds flourishes, and newspapers are practically untrammelled. Books directed against the government itself are sold openly in the bookstores of Cracow. It may be said, however, that the old spirit of individualism shows in the press, as many of the columns are given up to the personal squabbles between nobles and other leading families. Schools are not interfered with in any way, and letters may contain Polish titles, which is



A POLISH COTTAGE, GALICIA.

forbidden both in Prussia and Russia. There is absolutely no effort on the part of the Austrian government to make life unpleasant for the Poles, and they are officially recognized as such. She has recently given up the Wawel, which had been used for a long time as a military garrison, in order that the Poles may preserve this as a memorial of their old life. Taxes are fairly high, as they are in all parts of Austria, for the revenue required to support the military and the royal family of that country are very large.

The old ideas of class still survive in Galicia, and the Polish noble looks upon commerce as degrading, just as his ancestors did in the days of Polish independence. The younger generations are probably beginning to view business in a different light, as one can tell by many of the names over business places. Having a reasonable degree of freedom and local self-government, the Austrian Poles have never been as troublesome as those in either Russia or Prussia. They resent with indignation the treatment of their compatriots in those countries, but they are satisfied with their own condition, which seems so much better.

From Cracow to Lemberg the land is better than on the other side of Cracow. The soil is fairly level, with no boundary fences, and the boundary lines are marked by stones. There will be a little patch of wheat, then another of oats, or some other grain.

The sowing and reaping is generally done by hand, as the fields are heaped up in furrows so that harvesting by machinery is almost impossible.

Lemberg is the Lwow of Poland, which appears so frequently in her history. It is the largest town in the province of Galicia, and has a population of nearly one hundred and seventy-five thousand. One notices at once the nearness of Russia, for all signs will be seen in Russian and Polish, and frequently in German as well. One sees also the gilded domes of the Orthodox churches, for there are many adherents of this faith in Lemberg. Many Armenians also live in Lemberg, and an Armenian bishop resides in this city. But the Catholic Cathedral, founded in 1370 by Casimir the Great, is the most imposing religious edifice. Many, indeed, are the struggles which have here taken place for supremacy between the Orthodox and Catholic clergy.

The rather imposing station of Lemberg is at one end of the city, and it is quite a long ride by carriage to the centre of the town, which is built around a broad street parked in the centre. This is known as the Waly Hetmanski, and is ornamented with statues of the Hetman Jablonowski and John III Sobieski. There is also a theatre facing it, in which Polish and Polish-Italian operas are given each season. A part of the town is built on a rather imposing hill which dominates the city on one side. The gray-backed crows seem as much at home as



THE THEATRE, LEMBERG.

do the English sparrows in an American town. It is rather a handsome, modern-looking town, with fairly attractive stores. For centuries Lemberg was an important town, being one of the centres of Poland's trade with the East, and for that reason drew the large numbers of Armenians who still swarm here. It is still on the line of trade between the East and West, for the main line of railroad leading to Moscow and the Black Sea, via Odessa, passes through here. But few travellers stop in Lemberg, fewer still than take the time for a day or two at Cracow.

There is a large university in Lemberg, which claims some two or three thousand students. The Staropigiiski Institute is an institution devoted to the study of the Malo (Little) Russian language, and it has issued some very important works in that tongue. The Ossolinski Library is exceedingly rich in manuscripts and early printed Slavonic books. It has a collection of old engravings, antiquities, coins, etc. Many things interesting to the student of the Ukraine will be found in Lemberg.

Jews are as thick in Lemberg as in Cracow, comprising a quarter of the population, and they do not differ in appearance from those of the other city. They possess two splendid tabernacles, for many of the Jewish traders are wealthy. But the Ghetto proper is not an attractive place, as it is situated around the old market, and is permeated with the

filth which usually accumulates around such a place.

The nearness of Lemberg to Russia is shown by the inquiry for passports.

“Have you a passport?” was asked me by my boniface.

“Yes,” I answered.

“What is the number? I must take down the number.”

The same interest is shown on the German border. After leaving Russia at Alexandrovo, a German officer boarded the train at Thorn, the first station.

“Let me see your passport,” he asked.

“It is American,” I answered.

“But I must see it.”

“Is this Germany or Russia?” I finally asked him. This angered the man with the shoulder-straps, and he let loose a lot of German faster than I could catch it. I finally produced the required document, and his anger was mollified somewhat. Nowhere else, either in Germany or Austria, was a request made for this little certificate of citizenship.

CHAPTER XV

RUSSIA AND HER POLISH SUBJECTS

Kingdom of Poland — Peasants — Costumes — Irish and Poles —
Russification policy — Commercial prosperity — Lodz — Polish
retaliation — Strikes — Socialism — Duma — Mariavites — Bor-
der patrol — Smuggling — Passport system — Lithuania — Vilna.

WHEN one speaks of Russian Poland the reference is generally confined to that part of the old "republic" known as the Kingdom of Poland, which was established by the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. According to that treaty this territory was to remain a separate state linked to the Russian Empire by a personal union of sovereigns. The "Kingdom" excludes the provinces bordering on the Baltic Sea, including Courland, the Lithuanian provinces, and the Ukraine, now known as Little Russia, which reached to the Black Sea. All of these provinces were included in Poland at the time of her greatest expansion. It also omits Kiev, and Smolensk, once important Polish cities, and Grodno, where every third Diet used to meet.

The Kingdom of Poland includes forty-nine thousand square miles, and is as large as the states of Ohio and Connecticut combined. It is one of the richest grain-growing countries in Europe, and pov-

erty should be less evident. Every patch of the ground seems fertile, and ready to respond to the efforts of the agriculturalist. Thousands of head of cattle, horses and sheep are raised, and it is one of the principal sources of supply for meat to Russia. Much wheat and rye are grown, for rye bread is a favourite article of food with the Slav. The enormous stacks of rye after a harvest look like ancient round towers with low and pointed roofs.

The lands of the peasants and nobles can readily be distinguished. The fields of the nobles are fairly well cultivated, for they are able to employ improved machinery, while the land of the peasants is divided into narrow strips like they are all over Russia. Sometimes these diminutive strips may not be wider than eight or ten feet. They may be long, however, for it is easier to cultivate a patch in that shape. Thus one will find a narrow strip of oats or wheat next to an equally narrow strip of rye, flax or potatoes. At harvest time the peasants arm themselves with the old-fashioned scythes, which have been in use for generations, and cut their grain. In the olden days these scythes were the common weapons of war in peasant uprisings. The threshing is likewise done in the simplest and most primitive way. It is not surprising that the peasants find it difficult to maintain existence in this way, especially when an unfavourable season is sure to occur every few years. There are few gardens



POLISH GIRLS AT WORK IN THE FIELD.

among the peasant holdings, while fruit trees and roses are almost unknown. The homes of the nobles, on the contrary, sometimes have beautiful surroundings, and the manor house is attractively arranged.

The landscape is flat, and the dull level is only broken by trees, churches, woods, or windmills. It is an almost uninterrupted view of horizontal fields. Between Warsaw and Vilna, and east of Warsaw in general, there is considerable forest, but west of that city the forests disappear. Between Warsaw and Alexandrovo the neatest buildings to be seen are the railway stations, which resemble Italian villas with red Swiss roofs. The windmills with their great arms beating the air look decidedly picturesque. They are still used in grinding the grain for the peasants who bring it in their little wagons. Lofty wooden crosses stand in many of the fields. They are not crucifixes, but plain wooden crosses. If one decays and falls, it cannot be replaced without a government permit, and that must be obtained from St. Petersburg. The bureaus in the Russian capital are not noted for their promptness in granting such requests.

The old Polish costumes have disappeared, but distinctive costumes are still worn. Red or yellow with alternating green stripes are most common. The men wear baggy trousers made of the same material as the skirts of the women. In one dis-

trict west of Warsaw, every peasant seemed to wear this costume almost without exception. Some were working in the fields, others walking or driving along the highway. The children looked like little grandfathers or grandmothers, being dressed in exactly the same style as their elders. Sometimes the red or yellow was darker or lighter, and occasionally the stripes were narrower or wider, but these combinations were almost universal. The colour in costumes brightened up the rather dull monotony of the landscape.

The Czar of Russia still bears the title King of Poland, but the Kingdom of Poland officially disappeared in 1868, when these provinces were incorporated with the Russian Empire under the official designation of the Cis-Vistula governments.¹ These ten provinces have been as troublesome a thorn in the side of Russia as has been Ireland to Great Britain. There are likewise many points of similarity in the character of the two peoples, the Poles and the Irish. Each one is independent in thought and action, somewhat volatile in character, and with a gift of oratory which he delights to use.

If Russia should grant to Poland a separate parliament, similar to the Diet of Finland, much of the trouble would undoubtedly disappear. It would give a centre around which Polish nationality would

¹ These are ten in number, and are designated as follows: Kalisz, Kielce, Lomza, Lublin, Piotrkow, Plock, Radom, Siedlce, Suwalki, and Warsaw.



A PEASANT WOMAN, RUSSIAN POLAND.

cluster. At the same time Russia is strong enough that she would not need to have any apprehension of Poland attempting to secede. There is even more reason for a separate Polish parliament than an Irish parliament, because of the difference in language and customs between the Poles and the Russians. The only concession ever made to the Poles was in giving to the peasants some of the land of the nobles. But a quarter of the peasants are now absolutely landless.

The general condition in Russian Poland is not good. Nine-tenths of the twelve millions, the estimated population in 1910, belong to the lower class, and only about one per cent. can be included in the aristocracy. About eight or nine millions are agriculturalists. Almost eighty per cent. of the population are illiterate. Even in Warsaw, half of the adult population are almost absolutely without learning. That city has not school accommodation for more than half the children of school age, and in the rural districts the condition is much worse.

A loyal Poland would be of inestimable benefit to Russia. The Polish-speaking part of that empire adjoins Germany and the Teuton. There is destined at some time, perhaps in the not distant future, to be a struggle for supremacy between the Teuton and the Slav, and in such an event Poland would be the buffer state, because of its situation. The Russification policy of attempting to displace the Polish

language with the Russian, and of denying to Poles the places of influence in the government and army, cannot have any other effect than an alienation from the ruling power. Russia once passed a law requiring all letters to be addressed in Russian characters, but the postal receipts fell off so much that she was obliged to abandon that attempt.

Russia has, like Germany, made a systematic campaign against the Polish language. For a long time it was forbidden in all schools, but this policy has been somewhat relaxed. Even government railway servants were forbidden to use it in their duties. The censor would not permit the use of the word Polish in newspapers, but prescribed the word "our." All patriotic expressions and appeals to patriotism were forbidden. The harshness of the Russian censor has suppressed many Polish books, but it has simply encouraged the surreptitious circulation of revolutionary and other forbidden literature written in the Polish language, for the people were determined to read in that tongue. Such actions have naturally made the Poles evasive, and have caused them to do many things in an underhand way. They violate all the restrictions when they can do so undetected. They frequently keep their children from school, because they want to shield them from Russian contamination. There are a number of Polish newspapers, — except in Lithuania and Little Russia, where they are for-

bidden, — but the actions of the censor generally make them practically colourless. One fear constantly faces the Poles, and that is that the Russian government may eventually compel all newspapers to print at least a part of their issues in the Russian language.

In view of these conditions one can appreciate the definition of an idea given by a Polish child. “What is an idea?” a little girl was asked by her teacher. “An idea,” said this wise little miss, “is what is opposed to the government.” Her answer was probably nearer the truth than she thought.

If the Pole goes to Moscow, he finds in the palace of the Kremlin a museum of objects sacred to him. There he will see twenty-two marble busts of the kings and distinguished men of his beloved country. The Polish throne is exhibited there, and the crown worn by her last king. Three score of battle-scarred and bullet-torn Polish banners are there kept. And, most opprobrious of all, the famous constitution of May 3rd, 1791, is preserved in a closed casket. Humiliating indeed it must be to the proud Pole to find these sacred insignia of his fatherland, and this instrument deeply impregnated with the idea of human liberty, here preserved as museum curios for the curiosity-loving public to gaze upon. It does not soften his feeling of resentment toward the Muscovite.

In one respect Russian policy has resulted in an advantage to Poland. Russia has attempted to encourage manufacturing by a liberal commercial policy, and Poland has reaped the benefit. With the exception of the manufacturing district around Moscow, factories have increased more rapidly in Poland than in any other section of the empire. But wages are generally low, from thirty to fifty cents a day, the hours are long, and the sanitary conditions in factories are frequently bad. As rent is high in the cities one will frequently find a dozen people living in a single room to economize.

The city of Lodz has grown in a quarter of a century from a comparatively small town to a city of four hundred thousand people by the influx of factory hands. The growth of Warsaw also began with that same movement, and other Polish cities, such as Czenstochowa, have grown almost with American rapidity, until the urban population in Russian Poland is greater than that of any other section of Russia. It constitutes more than one quarter of the whole. Since the unfortunate revolution of 1863, when no fewer than fifty thousand Poles were either executed or exiled, the Poles have been more than willing to turn their energies into an effort to acquire wealth. Many of their brainiest people have engaged themselves in the practical lines of business, and this fact, aided by Jewish thrift, has resulted in the building up of many industries. But

industrial development and material wealth does not offset the effect of political bondage.

The Russian government subjects the Polish people to many petty annoyances. It will not, for instance, permit the erection of a memorial to Kosciuszko, the Polish patriot honoured in both Poland and the United States. It is not always so savagely severe, but is constantly interfering in the private concerns of the people, worrying them with minute regulations, and subjecting them to many trifling formalities, which offend Polish susceptibilities. Russian passports must be secured whenever a Pole wishes to leave his province. The country is under a governor-general, who has absolute power of life and death over the people, with far more power than similar officials in most parts of Russia. The citadel of Warsaw, with its garrison of one hundred thousand or more, is designed rather to overawe the Poles than to defend the town from any foreign foe. It is no wonder that several hundred thousand Poles have migrated to the United States from Russia, so that they might secure a home in a land where every nationality is given the same privilege.

“We must picture to ourselves,” says Mr. Brandes, “a naturally very energetic people, against whose energy a barrier not to be broken down has been erected; a warlike people, who only reluctantly enter the army, in which practically no young man voluntarily chooses the post of officer;

an extremely ambitious people, to whom all high positions and offices are closed; and to whom all distinctions and demonstrations of honour are forbidden, in so far as they are not bought with sacrifice of conviction or denial of solidarity with their countrymen; a people naturally hostile to Philistine ideals, but who needed to acquire the civic virtues, and whose circumstances now give them constant encouragement to unsteadiness; a people with a lively, irresistible inclination to politics, for whom all political education has been made impossible, because they are allowed neither to elect representatives nor to discuss affairs of state, and whose political press is silenced in all political matters."

In retaliation for their treatment, the Poles do some very queer things. When general mourning was ordered for Alexander III, the people of Warsaw tied bits of crape to the tails of their dogs. As the Polish colours of red and white are forbidden, they will fly the Danish flag, which is a white cross on a red ground, and can be folded so as to represent the Polish flag. At other times they will buy Russian flags in which the blue is of a kind that will fade at once, thus leaving only red and white. The child sucks in hatred of Russia from its mother's breast.

Some of the trouble in Russian Poland in recent years has resulted from the antiquated labour laws of Russia. Strikes have always been considered in

the same light as an insurrection by Russia, and have been dealt with in the same way as a conspiracy. Labour unions being forbidden, illegal secret societies have taken their places, and these naturally develop revolutionary tendencies. The Pole is not so submissive by nature as the Russian peasant, but even the worm will turn, as the Russians found out in the revolutionary disturbances which lasted from 1905 to 1907. There were some riots against mobilization among the Poles and Polish Jews, during the Russo-Japanese war, but there were likewise riots in more purely Russian provinces. It was claimed that Polish and Jewish regiments were placed where the bulk of the loss would fall on them. It is not to be wondered at that socialism, or some form of socialistic organization, has increased in the Polish centres. The National League was organized to keep patriotism alive. The conservative Poles have stuck to this organization, while the progressives have favoured everything tending to industrialism. Both Socialists and Nationalists are active revolutionists.

When the revolution of 1905 was at its height, Warsaw was indeed a turbulent city. Few policemen were to be seen, as so many had been shot. In one period of ten days twenty-seven policemen were killed. In retaliation the soldiers would fire down the streets, so that many innocent people were killed, while the perpetrators of these outrages es-

caped unharmed. The people became hardened to bloodshed. Plots and counterplots were thick. A revolutionary body would sentence some hated official to death, and then an opportunity would be awaited to carry out the sentence. The greatest chances were sometimes taken by the would-be assassins. These conditions in a greater or lesser degree lasted for more than two years, and it was during this time that the anti-Semite hatred broke out in many places.

When Nicholas II came to the throne in 1894, the Poles, together with other classes in Russia, hoped for a more liberal government. Nicholas visited Warsaw soon after he was crowned. But the hopes of the oppressed subjects were not realized, for he soon showed himself reactionary. When the Duma was established in Russia in 1906, the Polish patriots again began to have dreams of better things. The czar expressed as his "unalterable will" his intention to maintain the civil rights of "inviolability of the person, freedom of belief, of speech, of organization, and meeting." Liberal franchise laws were drawn up. The Poles elected some of their best men to this representative body, among whom was Sienkiewicz, the favourite novelist of the Poles. There was a large element in the first Duma and its successor which favoured granting autonomy to Poland, but the bureaucrats were alarmed at this tendency. According to their con-

ception the Muscovite must be supreme, and one ideal, the Muscovite ideal, must prevail over the whole country. After the dissolution of the first two Dumas, the number of Polish representatives was reduced; and the election laws were so changed that Poland's representation in that body lost a great deal of its influence.

Even more resentful is the Pole toward the Russian because of the active propaganda to spread the Orthodox Church, and to convert the Polish peasants to the Orthodox faith. The only good Russian, in the eyes of that government, is the Orthodox Russian. It is simply the survival of a view that prevailed over all Europe at one time. Roman Catholic priests are not allowed to travel more than a few miles from home without special permission, and even then they are oftentimes compelled to resort to bribery. A priest cannot, under any circumstances, visit or minister to the sick outside of his own parish. Anything approaching propaganda or proselyting is absolutely forbidden. The children of mixed marriages, where one of the parties is Orthodox, must be brought up in the latter faith. A church cannot be built or repaired without the consent of the resident bishop of the Orthodox Church.

A peculiar situation has grown up through the organization of a religious sect known as the Maria-vites. This order was founded by Maria Franziska

Kozłowska, a descendant of the Puławski family, in 1893. It was first established a few years earlier at Plock as an order for women. Hence came the name *Mariae vita*, the life of Mary, for the Virgin was taken as the guide. Madam Kozłowska then claimed to have received a direct revelation from God, commanding her to form a society for priests who would live according to the Franciscan rules. They must preach "adoration of the Son of Man, and invocation of the Mother of God." Frequent confession and partaking of the communion are prescribed. It was really an attempt to revive the Roman Catholic Church from within.

A number of Roman priests joined the new movement, and controversies soon arose with the heads of the Church. Among those who joined the new movement was a priest named Johann Kowalski. An appeal to Rome was made. The Mariavites were denounced in a papal encyclical, and both Kowalski and the founder excommunicated. Kowalski was consecrated a bishop by a seceding Roman bishop, and is now the head of the Church. The priests wear a light gray habit. They must be vegetarians, and the use of neither tobacco nor alcohol is allowed. No pictures or statues of saints, except Mary, Mother of Christ, are allowed in their edifices. They deny the real presence of Christ in sacrament.

There are at least two hundred thousand adherents of the Mariavites in Russia. They are espe-



RUSSIAN SOLDIERS.

cially strong in Warsaw, Lodz, and Zgierz. Serious trouble has occasionally arisen in which a number have been killed. The people sometimes bleat like goats when the Mariavites appear. In some cases whole congregations have gone over, and legal entanglements have arisen over church property. The Catholics accuse the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church with financing the Mariavite movement, for the latter seems to be well provided with funds. The charge appears to me to be well founded. Whether it is true or not, the belief has intensified the bitter feeling towards the Russians.

The boundary line between Russia and her neighbours, especially Germany and Austria, is closely guarded. "The soldiers are so thick," said a Jew, "that I wonder they do not shoot one another by mistake." One or more heavily armed pickets will be found close to the border in every kilometer, and a couple of miles behind there is generally another cordon of patrols. These men do not hesitate to shoot at any one who fails or neglects to obey a command to halt. Every road crossing the border is obstructed by a heavy chain, which is removed only after baggage has been searched and passports examined. If the person seeking to cross is a Pole or a Jew, his whole person is searched, for fear something contraband may be concealed. And yet, in spite of all this precaution, a regular contraband trade in merchandise and persons without passports

is carried on. They are floated up or down the rivers, or are taken across at convenient places. Many Jews are engaged in this business. There is an element of risk, of course, for a bullet sometimes finds its mark, but the Jew smuggler knows the power of the rouble and the susceptibility of the underpaid Russian.

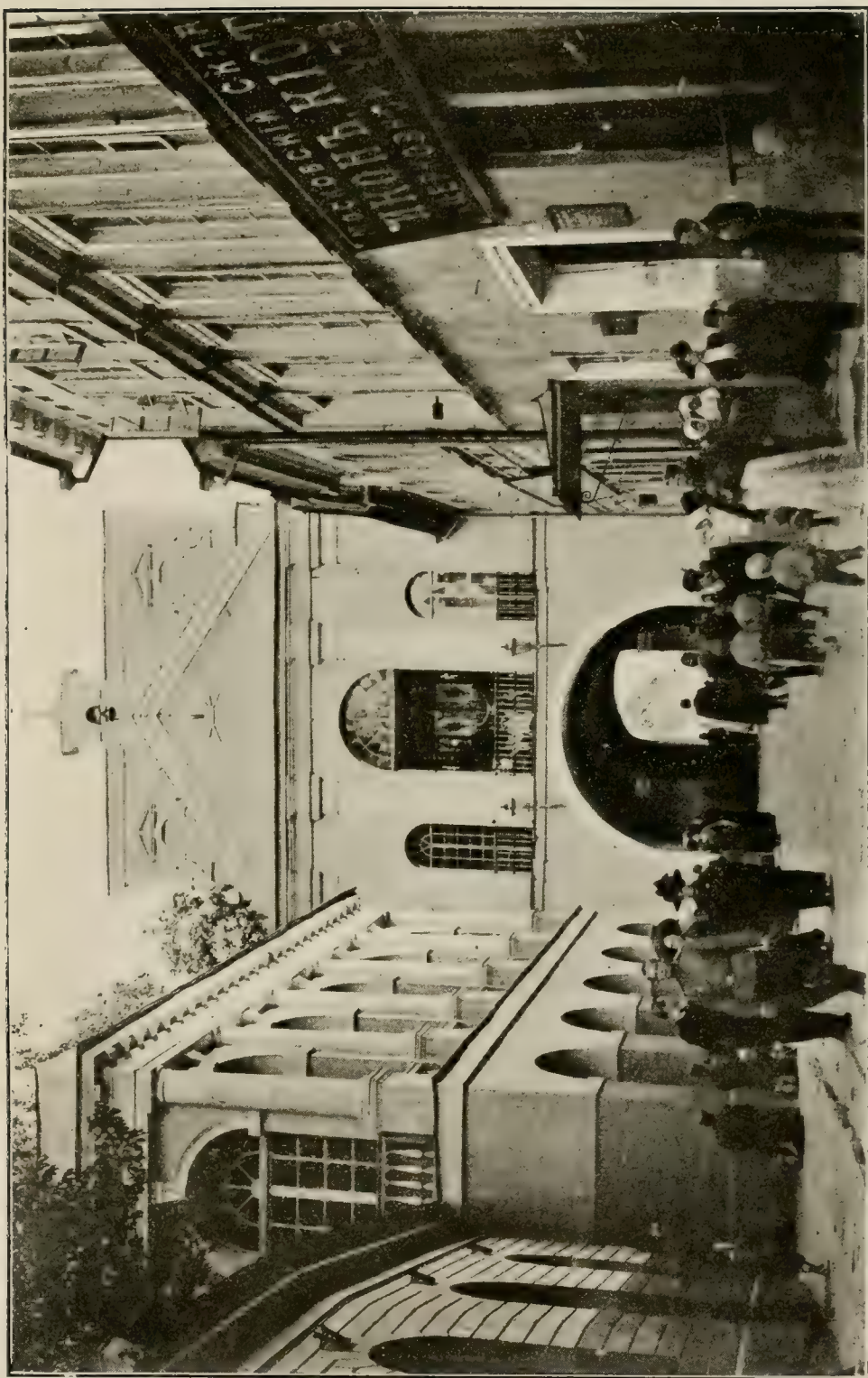
Passports are required everywhere in Russia. A Russian who wishes to visit a neighbouring province on business or pleasure must provide himself with a domestic passport. If he wishes to leave the country, he must secure a foreign passport. Imagine a New Yorker being obliged to carry a passport if he wished to cross over to Jersey City. As soon as a traveller engages a room in a hotel he must deliver up his passport to a hotel servant. It is then taken to the police headquarters, where it is registered. At the border he cannot leave the station until it has been examined and approved. It seemed to me an easy matter, however, for deception to be used. Absolutely no attempt was made to see whether the holder of the passport was the one to whom it had been issued—to identify the holder with the description on the document. The officials have so many submitted to them for inspection that minute examination is probably impossible. For that reason, also, the procuring of forged or false passports is a recognized and flourishing business.

Lithuania is governed by special statutes. There is evident a still more determined effort to stamp out everything tinged with Polonism. Not only are Polish newspapers forbidden, but the speaking of Polish is interdicted. Hence many Lithuanians enjoy a visit to Warsaw occasionally, so that they can exercise their knowledge of Polish on the streets. Present Lithuania, which includes the governments of Vilna, Grodno, Vitebsk, Mohilev, and Minsk, is generally known as White Russia. It is not a very prosperous looking country. It is a land where man has not yet subdued nature entirely. There is much marshy and forest land. Although conditions have improved considerably since the abolishment of serfage, it is not yet as prosperous as some of these provinces farther south. The groups in the villages are rather squalid and dirty, and there is a great deal of the appearance of blight and impoverishment. It is especially noticeable to one just arriving from Germany or Austria, because of the contrast in both landscape and the appearance of the people.

Serfage in Lithuania was harder than in either Great or Little Russia. Elsewhere there was at least a common religious bond. Here the landlords were mostly Polish Catholics, alien in at least religion. The nobles spent their time in Warsaw or Cracow in luxury, while most likely a severe German taskmaster was left in charge of the estate.

Sometimes the steward was a Jew, but that meant no improvement. The Polish nobles held themselves superior, not only in social standing, but also of a different flesh and blood. It is little wonder that the peasantry did not develop a high standard of either honesty, cleanliness, or temperance. The Lithuanians are usually fairly tall men, blue-eyed and fair of feature. In their capacity for drink they will not yield to any other people of modern Russia. In the towns Jews congregated in large numbers the same as they did in Poland, for they enjoyed not only comparative favour but immunity from the oppression cast upon them by other nations.

Vilna, which was the centre of most of the great events in Lithuanian history, is still a place of considerable importance, though visited by few travellers. It was founded by Gedimin in 1322. The city is built at the junction of the Vilna and Vilayka rivers. It is the point of divergence for the two railway routes between St. Petersburg and Berlin, one via Warsaw, and the other via Königsburg. It is now a city approaching two hundred thousand inhabitants, of whom probably one-third are Jews. This race has most of the trade in their hands. The city is located in a pretty valley, with gentle hills rising in every direction. A fine view of the country is afforded by a ruined tower of the former palace of the Grand Dukes on a hill that overlooks the town. Here it was that the old Lithuanian



THE HOLY GATEWAY, VILNA.

heroes worshipped. On this hill the sacred fire was ever kept burning in a temple built at the founding of the city, so long as the heathen worship was followed.

The "Grand Army" of Napoleon passed through Vilna in 1812. For a moment it was thought that the ancient grandeur of the kingdom would return. Napoleon entered the city in triumph. The nobility crowded around him with enthusiasm, and the restoration of the old Lithuanian state was proclaimed. But this was before Moscow and the events succeeding. A few months later the remnants of the "Grand Army" again passed through the gates of the city.

Near this city there is a stone, on one side of which is this inscription: "Napoleon Bonaparte passed this way in 1812 with 400,000 men." On the other side is this inscription: "Napoleon Bonaparte passed this way in 1812 with 9,000 men." A terrible tragedy is revealed by these two inscriptions.

As my droshki was driven toward the hotel, we passed under a very holy gateway before which scores of peasants were kneeling. Not knowing the sacredness of the place, I did not remove my hat until the carriage was almost stopped by the outraged worshippers. The driver looked around and motioned towards my hat, and a gentleman with me took it off for me. I had been absorbed in watching

the crowd, and the lack of courtesy was not intentional on my part; but the ignorant people did not understand this. It is an illustration of the fact that the Lithuanians of to-day are as much devoted to their new faith as they were loth to give up the old.

Vilna to-day is one of the most interesting cities in former Poland, for one who wants to study the old. The architecture of a previous age and the antiquated characteristics still prevail. Most of the town has not been changed. The architecture is quaint and almost mediæval. The streets are narrow and winding, and the stores are very much behind the times. Street cars drawn by horses still rattle over the stony streets. For that reason it is not very cleanly. But one day during my visit the rain fell in torrents, until the narrow streets, being unaided by sewers, were three or four inches deep with running water. It was harder than any tropical rain that I have ever seen, and seemed almost like the cloudburst that one sometimes reads about. The atmosphere was noticeably better after this thorough flushing.

The Jewish quarter is as dirty and bad as in any city within the ancient Poland. The inhabitants have the same slouching gait, wear the same long coat, and live by the same sharp dealing as they do in Warsaw. The Lithuanian population are very unprogressive, and not very attractive. On a holi-

day that I passed in Vilna, all the population seemed to turn out in the little park. Among the peasants was one girl of Little Russia in her bright costume. I could not help noticing how much brighter and comelier she looked than the companions with her.

Vilna had at one time quite a celebrated university, which was founded as a Jesuit college, in 1578, by Stephen Batory. This institution was suppressed about a century ago, and the great library removed to St. Petersburg. With the university seemed to go the learning and literature for which the city was at one time noted.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NOBLES

A wedding — Improvidence — Palatines and castellans — The Pans — A noble's retinue — Wealth — Elaborate entertainments — Retainers and courtiers — Sports — Banquets — Drinking — Barbaric display — Genealogies — Patriarchal government — Hospitality — Women.

“ You came to Cracow at an opportune time,” said the English-speaking porter at the Grand Hotel. “ There is to be a wedding at the old cathedral in the Wawel, which will unite two of the oldest families in Poland.”

The porter was right, for this wedding brought to Cracow almost a hundred representatives of the Polish aristocracy from Austria and Russia. Many of them brought their personal servants along, and coachmen and footmen as well, clothed in elaborate livery. Some of these nobles were descendants of the old families of the palatines, families that have been prominent for four or five centuries. The difference between the nobles and the peasants was easy to be seen, as the former are tall, finely formed, but rather slender types of manhood and womanhood, while the peasants are usually short and rather stocky in their build. Nature was certainly kind to these Poles in a physical sense. They like

good living, which to them means both good eating and good drinking.

There is still the air of the *grand seigneur* about the nobles, and the air of aristocracy was most noticeable. It is doubtful whether they have become any more provident or economical than their ancestors were during the days of independence. For centuries they have nourished an inherited aristocratic contempt for the merchant and manufacturer. The doctrine of loving work for its own sake has scarcely penetrated the Polish aristocrats to this day. They have had the desire to enjoy life and not to earn bread; to live lavishly and carelessly. No one works unless it is absolutely necessary, and many who should work, do not. Several of the ladies of the wedding party were gifted with the beauty for which Polish women of the upper classes are noted. Some were blondes, with a wonderful clearness of complexion, while others approached the brunette type. Most of these representatives of the aristocracy stopped at the same hotel, and all of the wedding festivities took place there, including a dance, reception, and a wedding feast. A cardinal and two bishops took part in the ceremony, which added dignity and solemnity to the occasion.

Even up to the time of the disappearance of Poland from among the nations as a separate kingdom, the nobles retained their ancient power. Each

one whose wealth permitted it maintained about him an army of retainers. According to the Polish laws a noble was a person possessed of a freehold estate, or one who could prove his descent from ancestors possessing a freehold, who followed no trade, and could choose his own place of residence. There were exceptions, however, for Sobieski ennobled all his cavalry after the victory of Vienna. All of these nobles were equal by birth, and the laws expressly stipulated that titles gave no precedence. Practically the only exceptions to this rule were a few Lithuanian princes who retained their titles after the union of the two kingdoms. Even royal decorations never stood in high favour among the Poles, and they were not introduced until the days of the Saxon kings.

The highest in rank were the palatines, who were governors of the palatinates, and next to them were the castellans, who ruled over provinces. All of these dignitaries held office for life. The castellans were further divided into the greater and the lesser, according to the dignity of their provinces. They were at the head of the nobles in their provinces when assembled for election or war. They had the right of fixing the price of produce, and of regulating the weights and measures in their bailiwicks. All of these officials had seats in the Diet. The administration of justice practically lay in their hands, for which they had their own courts. Disputes con-

cerning property inheritance and high treason were the only questions that had to be carried before the royal court. Those holding political offices were called *panowie*, or the "Pans," and they formed a sort of office-holding class. The nobility, who discharged the duties of no office, were called the *szlachta*. Many of these were very poor, and they became the hangers-on of the more powerful nobles. They were obliged to vote in the Diet as they were ordered by their patrons.

The growth of the power of the nobility dates from the earliest days of Poland. In 1496 the final blow to the plebeians came when a law was passed forbidding them to own land. The peasants then became serfs, and finally they were not even allowed to travel from one place to another without a passport issued by the noble landlord. Those without passports were considered fugitives and vagabonds. Many shameful abuses of the power of the nobles are recorded in Polish history and by contemporary writers.

The degradation of a stalwart peasantry is one of the darkest blots on Polish history, even though it was a common condition of that age. In a sense it was worse than that of the Russian peasants, for they had the *Mir*, the village commune, which gave them a certain feeling of independence. But the nobles demanded such a high degree of liberty for themselves that they should have been fairer to

those under them. If a peasant owned a horse and a couple of cows he was extremely fortunate. It is no wonder that the peasants failed to smile, while their lords devoted all their time to pleasure. So long as they raised sufficient from their estates to support themselves in luxury, the nobles were indifferent not only to their serfs but to their country as well. A man, though born of noble rank, who engaged in any commercial transaction, immediately lost his caste. As many of the families of the nobles, through their dissipation and recklessness, lost their estates, they attached themselves to the retinue of the more fortunate ones, rather than engage in any menial occupation. As a result the richer nobles frequently had about them a small army of retainers, each of whom was a noble by his own right.

The “*Journal of the Countess Francoise Krasinska*,”¹ who afterwards married a son of Augustus III, written between the years 1759 and 1761, is a most interesting picture of Polish life. “There are two classes of courtiers,” she writes in describing her own home, “the honorary and the salaried ones, all alike nobles, with the sword at their side. The first are about twenty in number; their duties are to wait in the morning for the Count’s (her father) entrance, to be ready for any service he may require, to accompany him when visiting or

¹ A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago.

riding, to defend him in case of need, to give him their voice at the Diet, and to play cards and amuse him and his guests. This last duty is best performed by our Matenko, the fool or court jester, as the other courtiers call him. Of all the courtiers he is the most privileged, being allowed to speak whenever he chooses and to tell the truth frankly. . . . The honorary courtiers receive no pay, almost all of them being the sons and daughters of rather wealthy parents, who send them to our castle for training in courtly etiquette. The men receive, nevertheless, provisions for two horses, and two florins (about 40 cents) weekly for their valets. These servants are dressed, some as Cossacks, some as Hungarians, and stand behind their masters' chairs at meals. There is no special table for them, but they must be satisfied with what their masters leave upon their plates, and you should see how they follow with a covetous eye, each morsel on the way from the plate to the master's mouth! I do not dare to look at them, partly from fear of laughing, and partly out of pity. . . . To tell the truth, those who sit at our table have more honour than profit, for they do not always have the same kind of food that we have, although it comes from the same dish. For instance, when the meats are brought in, there will be on the dish game or domestic fowl on the top, and plain roast beef, or roast pork, underneath. . . . The salaried courtiers are much more numerous.

They do not come to our table, except the chaplain, the physician, and the secretary. . . . As for other people belonging to our retinue, it would be difficult to enumerate them; I am sure I do not know how many there are of musicians, cooks, link-boys, Cossacks, hostlers, valets, chamberlains, and boy and girl servants. I know only there are five different dinner tables, and two stewards are busy from morning till night, giving out provisions for the meals."

Most of the Polish magnates spoke of their establishments as a "court," in the same way that royalty does. Some of these courts really outshone that of Polish royalty itself, as some of the monarchs were not wealthy. These nobles had their treasurer, who looked after the general expense of the house; their cupbearer, who looked after the maintenance of the cellars; their equerry, who had charge of the stables; their chamberlain, and various other officials. The noble was in reality an independent potentate on his own estate, even if he had no political position. The adjection of these noblemen to his retinue gave the potentate added influence, for it gave him augmented strength. Some of them were known to keep rebellious servants in chains for years, although many of them were extremely generous and kind to their menials. The wives of the nobles likewise had their establishments, at the head of which stood the lady cham-

berlain. They had a whole troop of lady servitors, and a court of so-called "ladies of honour." These latter were women of high birth but little money, generally relatives, who lived practically as members of the family. One or more was within call at times to dress or undress her ladyship, and perform any personal service demanded.

All the courtiers wore swords, and none were required to do any menial service. These men occupied a position intermediate between that of salaried officials and comrades. Attired in the fanciful costume of that period, they added to the glory of the rich man's retinue, and certainly swelled his sense of personal pride. As a noble was the only person under the Polish law who was entitled to wear a sword, it is said that occasionally one might find a man dressed in the very poorest of garments, following a plow or herding a flock of sheep, who proudly wore a sword by his side. Furthermore, as most of the nobles knew how to use the sword, it is not surprising to learn that the punishment for murder was trivial, and was only punished by a fine. The fines ranged from about sixty dollars for a peasant to six times that amount for a nobleman. This law setting a pecuniary value to human life continued down nearly to the time of the first partition.

The wealth of these nobles was as great as the poverty of the poor peasants was extreme. But

wealth was only a means to an end, and that end was to make life itself a great festival. The palatine of Borsk had erected in his park ornate pavilions dedicated to Life, Death, Wedlock, Friendship, and other abstract personifications. At Solec a noble had contrived underground grottoes on his estate where colonies of apes were shown on artificial islands. Some of the pictures which we read in descriptions of life in Poland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the time of the decadence of the country, are almost unbelievable. When one noble visited another, he took with him a retinue equal to that of a king in the Middle Ages. Very often they carried with them all of their own beds and bedding, and even table-ware.

One writer of that period, Hauteville, tells us that after all the guests have come, the gates are shut, and they are not opened again till the banquet is over and all the plate has been found. "If they did not use this precaution," he says, "the footmen would steal part of it. Those who are invited to the feast bring their footmen with them, and as soon as they are seated at the table, every one of them cuts off one-half of his bread, which he gives with a plate full of meat to his servant, who, after he has shared it with his comrade, stands behind his master and eats it." We read of one prince who set forth on official business having some hundreds of horsemen as a personal escort, and carrying

with him thirty large wagons loaded with provisions.

Elaborate entertainments in the courts of Europe were common in the eighteenth century, but in Poland they outdid those of other countries. Mr. Bain, in his "Last King of Poland," recites the instance of the entertainment of King Stanislaus in 1782 by the Pani Oginska, at her palace Alexandrowna. Whenever the king took a walk about the grounds, nymphs and goddesses in dresses suited to those characters would appear before him among the little islands on the river, and recite verses in his honour. A company of Chinese merchants on Arabian mules stopped his carriage and offered him pineapples and other products of the Orient. After lunch he was conducted to a grotto, where the village maidens welcomed him with rustic melodies. While the king stood near a little mill by an artificial cascade, admiring the scene and conversing with his hostess, a beautiful state barge came around the bend of the river laden with wine and confections. At a little theatre, built expressly for the occasion, entertainment was provided. For an evening entertainment the peasants were dressed up as shepherds and shepherdesses in picturesque costumes. Gypsies were provided who foretold the future of the king by their various artifices. An exciting race between a one-legged Italian buffoon and a tortoise provided a diversion. As a climax the king was presented

with a rhinoceros and a leopard. Thus it was with such semi-Oriental and almost barbaric pastimes that the high society of Poland amused itself and its monarch, while the throne was tottering on its very last legs.

It was really a point of honour among the nobles to make their parades as imposing as possible. When he attended the local Diet, a great noble would take his "court" with him, and the occasion was made a notable affair characterized by princely hospitality. A palatine would usually ride in the middle of his retinue, placing the best clothed of his servants before him. Some were Cossacks and dressed in that costume, while others looked like Magyars, arrayed in gorgeous Turkish attire and carrying Turkish daggers. A few of the nobles maintained regiments of huzzars, who wore carmine uniforms and semi-visored helmets. All carried long lances of light wood with a small streamer attached, and with sharp steel points, which made an imposing appearance on the march or parade, but were of little use in actual warfare. They carried two pistols and two swords, one of which hung from the saddle. It was a point of honour among these nobles to maintain as many of these retainers as possible. They formed a sort of militia, who were supposed to be at the service of the state.

The whole scheme of life had a great deal of the

barbarous in its elaborate display, but was decidedly picturesque. The nobles likewise shaved their heads after the Tartar fashion, leaving a little tuft on the crown. They delighted in athletic sports and the chase, and the forests furnished a plentiful supply of bear and the wild boar. On many occasions wild animals, such as bear, deer, wolves and wild boar, were captured and then let loose in the forests of the nobles to furnish sport for their guests. Hunts of this character were held almost on the edge of Warsaw itself.

The decline of Poland was undoubtedly due to this personal pride and arrogance of the nobles, for the power to settle all their affairs themselves caused them to lose all patriotic feeling. They preferred to build up a personal following, rather than aid in strengthening the nation. The intellectual attainments of many of the nobles did not compare with their accomplishments in other lines. Many of the young nobles were allowed to grow up in the greatest ignorance; especially was this true of Lithuania. They considered the study of letters very tame when compared with the livelier diversions offered by life in those days.

The art of catering to the physical wants had reached its highest degree in Poland. The banquets which were served by the Polish nobles were prepared by cooks who thoroughly understood the art. Deer and wild boar used to be roasted whole, stuffed

with ham and sausage, and served thus on the mammoth tables. Large cakes filled with all kinds of fruit were prepared with great skill. There was always an abundance of liquors. In fact, it is said that the popularity of a noble was based to a great extent upon his capacity for drink.

Hard drinking seemed to be looked upon rather as a virtue than a vice. It was one of the distinguished marks of a Polish gentleman. "Both in town and country," says Mr. Bain, "every male visitor on his arrival was welcomed with a stirrup-cup of generous dimensions. If he drained it off at one draught he won general approval, while if he followed it up by drinking a gallon of old Hungarian before dessert his fame was secured. At the house of Sapieha there was a very famous beaker renowned as a work of art, but still more so from the fact that Augustus II and Peter the Great had successively drained it to the dregs in each other's honour. It was religiously preserved in a magnificent cupboard especially made to house it, and was never brought forth except with the accompaniment of drums and trumpets." One noble, who could empty a bucket of champagne at a draught, without losing his head or feet, was the envy and admiration of his associates.

There are still preserved a number of historic drinking-cups, which it is said some of the nobles could drain at a single draught. Either the liquors

of that day were not so strong as those of the present age, or else the capacity of the modern man is less than his progenitors, for it is a feat that could not be accomplished at this day. A sick man was allowed to have a substitute to drink his toasts for him. As a result of the bacchanalian debauches which characterized the feasts among the Polish nobles, the ending was not always peaceable. Hence we read of many broken noses, and maimings in sword contests, which followed these feasts. Altogether it is not a very pleasing picture, judged by modern standards, which one can paint of these old Polish nobles. Many of the nobles literally ate and drank up their estates. It was no uncommon thing for a noble to pledge a town to pay for a single banquet.

The love of display was also very marked among the Polish nobles. They were never seen without a sword at their side, and all of their retainers were dressed in characteristic uniform, with the arms of the master embossed on the handles of the swords and in the silver sheaths. The saddles were oftentimes encrusted with gems. In the homes the same gorgeousness prevailed, and the splendour of the furnishings was only limited by the purse of the owner. The Polish costume displayed the same elaborateness and luxury. Wonderful sashes with gold and silver embroidery were wrapped several times around the waist. Polish knights went into

battle with real ostrich plumes on their saddles, and large wings on their cuirasses.

It is true that the nobles had their good traits, for the love of kindred and family affection was unusually strong. Genealogies and family trees were carefully preserved, and family ties were maintained even among those remotely connected. A cousin of the third or fourth degree was looked upon as belonging to the immediate family. Children were taught their pedigrees almost as religiously as the catechism. "I can recite the genealogy of the Krasinskis and the history of each of them as perfectly as my morning prayer," says the Countess Krasinska, "and I think that I should have more difficulty in telling the names of our Polish kings in chronological order than in telling those of my ancestors."

A knowledge of family ties was almost necessary, as nothing worth while could be obtained unless the applicant could trace his genealogy through about sixteen generations. The family genealogical tree is still carefully preserved, and a Polish aristocrat will claim to trace his family back almost to the time of the flood. He also makes it a point to be informed about the genealogy of his neighbours, and this can be done by reference to the published "blue books." The nobles had in general the virtues of primitive society. They were manly, generous, straightforward, and outspoken. The men were affectionate

husbands and indulgent fathers. They delighted in field sports and the chase. The reverence shown by children towards their parents was very great, and a son would not think of sitting down in the presence of his father or mother until invited to do so.

The patriarchal form of government still survives in the Polish family, and this filial respect is still characteristic of the young Polish aristocrats. A young man or woman would hesitate to sit down on an easy chair or couch, no matter how weary he might be, if there were older people in the room, unless an invitation was given. Children salute the parents by kissing them on the hand or coat-sleeve rather than the mouth. This latter form of salutation is still a common form of greeting and act of homage by the peasant to his landlord. It is delightful to see the grace with which a Polish gentleman will kiss the hand of a lady. It is done with the air of a real courtier. So close was the family connection maintained in the olden days that it gave rise to many conflicts, which reached almost the proportion of a civil war. An insult or slight to a member of the family was taken up by every member of the connection, and this involved hundreds of relatives, who perhaps had under them thousands of serfs. For the same reason, if a powerful family chose to unite together for political purposes, it was almost irresistible, unless opposed by an equally influential family.

The nobles were likewise peculiarly susceptible to religious impressions. Some of the most dissolute scrupulously observed all the prescribed ceremonies of the Church. They would fast on Saturdays, even flog themselves on Good Friday, and tell their beads over and over again. Sunday morning all attended services. On Sunday afternoon, however, the relaxation began, and continued until the next Saturday. One of the most dissolute, who used to suffer terribly from the qualms of his conscience, had a chaplain who shared his bedroom, in order to be ready at a moment's notice to exorcise the evil spirits and stifle the prickings of that disturbing censor.

Some of the Polish estates of to-day are very large. The Count Zamoiski owns four hundred thousand acres, a little principality in itself. Almost everything used is raised on the estate, and life is still lived on the patriarchal principle. Russian Poland is one of the richest grain-growing sections of Europe, and many of the Polish nobles still live in the greatest luxury. A host of servants are still maintained, and the houses are very spacious. The approach is generally through a long avenue of trees, probably limes, and the house is generally long, low and rambling — a red-tiled palace of one story with walls of white stucco. There is sure to be a little chapel with an altar before which a candle is usually kept burning. Many maintain fish-ponds,



A POLISH NOBLE'S HOME.

which supply the finny tribe for the table. A nest of storks will generally be found, for these birds are looked upon as a good omen. Even the men are supplied with elaborate wardrobes, two or three dozen costumes, and they take as much care with their toilets as the ladies.

Polish hospitality is open and sincere. Tactfulness as a host seems to be an inborn quality and a deep-seated instinct. The people like company, and they love entertainment. Perhaps no people in the world are so fond of dancing, and they prolong their dances throughout the entire night, with several lunches and plenty of liquors served in the meantime. The *polonaise* and the *mazurka*, with its contrast of feminine gentleness and masculine force, were Polish inventions. The real Polish *mazurka*, however, is quite different from the dance that goes by that name in other parts of Europe and in America. It is forbidden in Russia to dance this dance in the national costume, as they delight to do. It takes a vigorous man to stand all the liquors that are provided by a Polish host. The gay season extends from a short time preceding Christmas until the beginning of Lent. They dance all through the carnival time as no other people do, and charity balls are probably more numerous among them than any other people.

The carnival season rivals that of Italy and France. The people flock to the cities, which are

the recognized centres of the carnival spirit. Mothers with marriageable daughters and eligible young men looking for wives flock there also, and many are the engagements that follow and furnish food for gossip during the lenten period. Easter is a great holiday, and another period of gaiety follows that great day. It is even a more important day with these people than Christmas, and preparations for it are begun weeks beforehand.

Woman occupies a place of unusual prominence in Poland. Some place her as superior to man in practically every way. "The men in Poland," says Mr. Brandes, "are not wanting in passion, in courage, and in energy, in wit, in love of freedom, but it seems as if the women have more of these qualities." "If the Polish eagle has never yet been tamed," writes Mr. Van Norman, "if it refuses to become domesticated, it is because the Polish women have nursed it and kept before it the scent of the upper air and the love of liberty. While there is a single Polish woman living, it is truly *Jeszcze Polska nie Zginela* — Poland is not yet lost." In the various conspiracies, and in the revolutions against Russia, Polish women have had an important part. Many have given up all their worldly goods in the cause of their country, while others have fought on the field of battle and lost their lives in the same cause. Still others have gone into exile without a murmur. They are capable of any sacri-

for patriotism, and they prove their sincerity by their actions. The women are still the most zealous patriots, and it is due to them more than the other sex that patriotic feeling is still so intense.

The Polish women have always been noted for their beauty, and the perfect shape of their hands and feet. They take part in all the social affairs, and no festivity is complete without their presence. They are extremely good linguists, and nearly all speak two or three languages. I met one young lady in Warsaw of nineteen or twenty summers, just out of school, who spoke Russian, German, French, and English almost as fluently as her native Polish. This is not an uncommon accomplishment.

The women do not enjoy the social freedom of the American girls, as the chaperone is still a necessity to protect the good name of a girl. They are never left unprotected for a moment. Marriages are made in much the same manner as in France, and the contracting parties frequently know little about each other before they are joined for better or worse. "The will of my honoured parents has ever been a sacred law to me," says the Polish girl with resignation. When a messenger came with a proposal of marriage, if a goose was served with dark gravy at dinner, or a pumpkin was put in the carriage as he was leaving, this meant that the offer was positively refused. "He was treated to a

goose fricassee '' was an expression frequently heard in the olden days.

The Polish women of the upper classes are undoubtedly charming and possessed of the graces of true womanliness. Perhaps it is the possession of these womanly qualities, and the absence of the masculine elements, wherein lies their real charm. A pencil or brush is certainly a much better medium than a pen to portray such attractive types of womanhood.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PEASANT AND HIS RELIGION

Ignorance — Tillers of the soil — Lot of women — Villages — Holidays — Tatra — The “Goorals” — Importance of religion — Shrines — Priests — Churches — Pilgrimages — Czentochowa — Mendicants.

“NIECH bendzie pochevalowy” (Christ be praised).

“Na wieky” (for ages and ages).

This is the customary greeting and answer among the Poles. It will be heard everywhere in travelling through that country. The peasant will always remove his hat in a truly gracious way, when he thus greets a noble or a stranger.

It cannot be said that the Polish peasant shines intellectually. For that matter few peasants do, since there has been little opportunity to develop his intellect. As a consequence he impresses one as being rather slow in both thought and action. But he is not so slow as the Russian peasant, and he has more independence of thought and action than his Slav brother. This quality sometimes approaches unruliness, as the Russian autocrat has experienced on many occasions. One will observe crudeness, but seldom coarseness or vulgarity. It is said that there is not even any slang in the lan-

guage. He is generally a self-respecting, even if poor, individual, and he has a great deal of good common sense.

The Polish peasant, like the Russian *moujik*, is essentially a tiller of the soil, for the Poles have always been an agrarian people. This has been his occupation during all the preceding generations, and it still continues to be the height of his ambitions. His talk is of agriculture, and most of his joys are connected with the different seasons. He loves to live thus close to Nature's heart. Only in Russian Poland has the peasant been drawn in large numbers to the cities. He is compelled to live simply, for his financial condition does not admit of luxury. Most of his food is raised in his own garden or fields. Potatoes are a great staple, and cabbage is almost as important. Beans, corn and beets also add to the larder. Cabbage is much used in making the thick soups so well liked, and a soup is also made of red beets. In summer his costume is simple, consisting only of thin shirt and trousers, but in winter a sheepskin coat with the wool turned inside is added. To the bare feet are also added coarse boots, and to the bare head a hat for the cold weather.

The lot of the women, however, is especially hard, as it is with all Slav races, and this is noticeable throughout all the Polish provinces. They do more than their full share of the family work. Some-

times one will see more women in the fields than men, and a kaleidoscopic effect of colour is then visible. Blue, green, yellow, gold and silver are mingled in various combinations. They pin up the overskirt, which leaves a bright petticoat exposed to view. A woman is valued chiefly for the work she can do, and she is expected to bear a large family of children as well. For a man to say that his wife does more work than a horse, or two horses, is considered the acme of praise. It is no wonder that a girl naturally attractive soon grows old and haggard. Hard work with little pleasure, the care of a numerous family, and no regard for personal attraction must inevitably leave their mark before many years. Hence it is that many of these Polish women look haggard and old even before they have passed the third decade of life.

There are indeed few bright spots in a Polish peasant girl's life after marriage. In their youth some of the girls are very attractive, and they look quite charming in their picturesque national costumes that are still common in Galicia. They generally go bare-footed in summer, for boots cost money. Sometimes they will carry their boots when going to church, and only put them on just before entering the sanctuary.

“ Do women work on the railroads as section-hands? ” I asked a fellow passenger on the railway in Galicia. I had seen groups of women along the

track with pick and shovel in hand, but could scarcely believe that they did the hard work of that occupation.

“ Yes, and they do the work better than the men,” he replied.

At Cracow I have seen them carrying mortar for the masons and plasterers, where new buildings are being erected. They were spading the flower-beds in the parks, and were doing the work as well as the masculine overseer could have done it. They can hang paper or paint a house. It did not make any difference whether there were three or a dozen women working together, there was always one man who did nothing but act as overseer. Along the roads they may be seen carrying heavy bundles or pushing loaded wheelbarrows. Everywhere they may be observed doing work that involves considerable physical strength.

Quaint villages are scattered everywhere throughout Poland, for it is thus that the peasants dwell. Especially will the villages be found interesting on Sundays and holidays, when costumes are donned. In the suburbs of Cracow and Lemberg are thatch-roofed cottages, just as simple and crude as can be found in the remotest village, while the streets and sanitary arrangements are just as much neglected. The cottages are generally made of stone or boards plastered over, and are then covered with a coat of whitewash. The straw roof is frequently crowned



POLISH WOMEN CARRYING MORTAR, CRACOW.

with green-growing moss, which adds to its picturesque appearance, if not its healthfulness. The interior is usually divided into two rooms. In one room the entire family live, eat and sleep; in the other, in more or less uproarious contentment, dwell the cows, pigs, chickens and geese. No household would be complete without a number of geese. In our American cities it is oftentimes difficult to persuade the Polish immigrants to give up keeping some of these fowls. They want the feathers as well as the flesh. Around the cottage a number of children are sure to be seen playing, for the Poles are a prolific race. A dozen or twenty or thirty of such cottages, each separated only by a small yard, make up a village. A few trees add shade and beauty to the landscape. A long pole, balanced near the centre, forms the well-sweep, which is used to draw water from the wells. The peasants of a village elect an official, somewhat after the communistic plan of the Russian peasants, and he acts as a sort of petty squire among them.

If there is a marriageable daughter in the house, the lintel of the door and the window surroundings are ornamented with little irregular hands, which is a notice to the marriageable young man that he may find a wife within. The marriage-day is the one bright spot in the girl's life, since it is made the occasion for festivities, and the ceremony itself is very picturesque. There is music by peasant musi-

cians, who play their liveliest tunes, and there must be some kind of liquor so that every one can drink the bride's health. The whole village turns out on such occasions. Joy and jollity reign supreme for the day. The landlord generally attends, and he and his family are supposed to dance with the peasants.

There are many holidays in all parts of Poland, and no people look forward to such occasions more eagerly than the Poles. With each holiday is associated some legend or primitive custom. Christmas is an important occasion. The singing of Christmas carols is almost universal, and the Poles sing them well. For several days prior the women are busy fashioning things for the feast on Christmas eve. When the first star appears the parents and children enter the dining-room. The table is laid as richly as circumstances afford. Under the table-cloth is laid a little hay in memory of the fact that Jesus was born in a manger. After partaking of a wafer, which has been blessed by a priest, the supper is eaten. Then the music is started, and the singing of carols begins.

Important as Christmas is, however, Easter is a still more ceremonious period. Holy Week is a great occasion, for each day has its own meaning. Figures of Judas are submitted to every kind of indignity. He is beaten, drowned in the ponds, and burned. It is somewhat like the Mexican custom of



POLISH BRIDE AND GROOM.

“exploding” the papier maché representations of that arch traitor. On Easter Monday the peasants pour pails of water over each other in a spirit of fun. On Sunday morning the peasants take baskets of eggs, cheese and bread to the church to have them consecrated for the Easter dinner. This is the most elaborate meal of the year with both nobles and peasants. For several days previous preparations have been made, and the table is set with the symbolical lamb in the middle.

Many festivities follow the harvest season, just as they do in Russia. In Podolia, one of the provinces of the Ukraine, they have quite a pretty custom. After the wheat or rye has been gathered, the prettiest girl is selected by ballot. A wreath of flowers is woven and placed upon her head. Two other girls are also selected as her attendants, who are likewise decorated with flowers. Then all march to the house of the landlord, where they are awaited, singing on the way. The lord or lady of the manor takes the wreath from the girl's head and gives her money, all of which the Ruthenian peasants then proceed to spend in a good time with eating and drinking.

In the Tatra region of Galicia, in the Carpathian Mountains, the peasant type changes. This Tatra region, which is not very far from Cracow, is one of the most interesting mountain regions of Europe. To Americans, however, it is much less familiar

than the Tyrol. It is the central point of the Carpathian Mountains. Isolated and sharply defined from the other portions of this range, it rises like a gigantic wall to a height of over eight thousand feet from the midst of a great plateau. The highest peak is Franz Joseph (8,737 feet), and Lomnitz (8,642) is only a little lower. There are fully a hundred little lakes to be found in the many valleys, which are called by the inhabitants "the eyes of the sea." There are many popular resorts in the Tatra region. It is a delight to dwell there amidst the clouds and white mist, and walk by the side of foaming streams which murmur among the moss-covered boulders and luxurious ferns, orchids and myosotis, or beneath towering cliffs of solid granite which pierce the skies with their sharp peaks and jagged ridges.

In contrast to the short, light-haired and rather heavy Polish type of the plains, the "goorals" are higher. The men are tall, with long, angular features, prominent cheek-bones, and penetrating eagle eyes. They resemble somewhat the red men of our own country in features. They are slender and sinewy, and have an elastic step. Their homes likewise have a sort of Swiss characteristic, being built of tightly-fitting logs of spruce, which become reddish-brown with age, and are surmounted by a very steep shingle roof. The big rafters are embellished with carved ornaments of a very unique character.

They are very clever in their wood carving — all of which is done by hand. They love their mountains, and have the feeling of independence characteristic of mountaineers. They are vivacious, hospitable, brave and chivalrous. They speak Polish, but with a dialect of their own. Their costume consists of a coarse linen shirt fastened with a brass brooch, a sleeveless sheepskin jacket of a reddish colour, richly decorated with ornaments of coloured leather and silk embroidery, and lined with fur. A belt of cowhide ten inches wide is worn by many, which is much ornamented with brass buckles and gew-gaws, and will weigh fifteen pounds. It jingles greatly as the wearer walks. A cloak is generally worn over one shoulder. A black felt hat shaped like a mushroom and soft leather sandals complete this costume, which sometimes weighs as much as thirty-five pounds.

The “gooral” always carries in his hands a tomahawk-like axe on a long shaft, which is used as a cane, a tool, or a weapon. The women are smaller, but quick and graceful. Their hair is combed flat, and plaited in long braids. They wear sheepskin jackets and rather long skirts. Orange, yellow or green kerchiefs are generally worn on their heads, and are pulled over their cheeks to protect them from sunburn. It would be difficult to find any people more primitive than these Carpathian Poles. One will still find the *zarna*, two disks of stone for

grinding grain. The upper one is set in rotary motion by a long pole attached at one end. Ploughs, harrows, pitchforks are all home made of wood. Wooden utensils of all kinds are fashioned for use in the homes.

A deep religious instinct seems to be inborn with the Slav peasant. The writer has had occasion to treat of that in "The Russian Empire of To-day and Yesterday." It is the same with the Polish peasant, with whom religion is also a part of his life. The only difference is the form of his religion, for practically all the Poles are adherents of the Church of Rome. With both races religion and patriotism are closely intertwined. In the daily life of the Polish peasant the name of Christ and the Virgin will be heard repeatedly. He would not think of living in a house that had not been blessed by a priest. A manufacturer would find it difficult to keep his hands if the factory had not been blessed. A theatre would die from lack of patronage if the priestly blessing had been denied the building.

The Slav temperament seems to be particularly susceptible to religious impressions, and devotion to the Church reaches a degree for which it is difficult to find analogies in any other part of modern Europe. All of the legends and folklore are religious in character, and many beautiful stories are related of the peasants' love and reverence for the Virgin and Christ. In particular, however, it is

the Virgin, the "Mother of God," as they call her, who is their protector, their ideal, and their refuge in time of trouble.

In Cracow one will find a shrine in almost every block, and at many of the prominent street intersections. In the country they rise up in the most unexpected places. Some of them are simply weather-stained wooden crosses, which stand erect among the fields, while others have an image of the Saviour or Virgin. Some of the plaster figures are most incongruous, and are so crude as to be really absurd. The Polish peasant is not satisfied with his worship in the churches, but he must bow himself at all of the shrines which he may pass.

One can only speculate as to the cause of this religious enthusiasm. It may be that the contest with Mohammedanism brought out these traits, and intensified the devotion of the masses to their own Church. While other people were attracted more or less by different faiths, and were affected to a greater or lesser degree by the currents of the Reformation, the Poles remained faithful to their Church, for which they were always ready to fight and die. For the Church they would willingly draw the sword. To be a good Pole, one must be a good Christian; and in order to be a good Christian, one must be a good Catholic. It is almost pitiful to see the desperation with which the Polish peasants cling to what seem to a Westerner to be antiquated

religious forms, and into the observance of which they seem to throw their whole soul. The men in the churches will almost equal the women in numbers, and they seem fully as absorbed in their devotion.

The Roman priest occupies an entirely different position from the Russian priest. The latter is regarded only because he is the sole person who can perform the rites of the church, and in his own person is frequently even despised. Provided the priest be the right priest, and the words he utters be the right words, and spoken in the proper way, and in the right place, they are certain to have the desired effect. The character of the speaker, or his commercial spirit in the transaction, makes no difference whatsoever. The priests form a caste much as did the Levites of old. The Polish priest is the real friend of his people. He is identified with every phase of the peasant life, and there are no festivities in which he does not take a part. He is looked up to as the guide and the guardian in many respects by his parishioners. It cannot be said that in his personal habits he always sets an ideal example.

In the churches the devotion of the Polish peasants is most noticeable. Worshippers prostrated upon the floor, and sometimes stretched out to represent the cross, may be seen at almost any time; and on days of church celebrations it is difficult at

times to move about among the swaying and recumbent forms of the worshippers without tramping upon some one or more. Occasionally a worshipper may become afflicted with some form of hysteria; some venerable man may beat his head upon the stone floor in his agony of spirit, while others will be afflicted with such depression that they become absolutely dumb. Children are early taught to do the various acts of homage. The sacred images are all worn smooth by the osculations of the devoted worshippers. Every conceivable device is employed by the clergy to obtain and retain control of the simple mind of the peasant. Every material that can draw the attention of the eye, and every sound that will attract the ear, is employed in the religious symbols.

There are many places of pilgrimage which are sacred to the Poles. The most holy of all, and the one as sacred to the Polish Catholics as is Kiev to the Orthodox Russians, is Czenstochowa, which is in Russian Poland and about half-way between Cracow and Warsaw. The royal processions on the way from Warsaw to Cracow for the coronation ceremonies used always to stop at this shrine. The modern city is rapidly growing, as a number of factories have been established. There is nothing attractive about it, except the scenes of religious devotion. When the Swedes invaded Poland, during the reign of John Casimir, these northern hosts cap-

tured Warsaw and Cracow. The king fled at first, but finally rallied his forces and defeated the invaders at this holy city of Czenstochowa, in 1655.

The Swedes were attracted by the great riches which had already been accumulated in the church at Czenstochowa, which is known as the Jasna Gora. Their invasion was looked upon as a sacrilege by the Poles. The defence of this church is a noted event in Polish history, and has been made the subject of one of Sienkiewicz's Trilogy — "The Deluge." The victory was due, according to the belief of the Poles, to the direct intervention of the Virgin Mother. For that reason the image which resides in this church is supposed to have a special holiness. The image itself is decorated with many precious stones, among which are diamonds, rubies, emeralds, topazes, and pearls — scarcely any precious stone is missing. Above the picture a massive gold crown stands out conspicuously. A group of church buildings, surrounded by a lofty brick wall, have been erected, which are situated on an elevation from which they can be seen for miles around. They resemble a fortress as much as a church. Many actual miracles are believed to have been performed here, and the Virgin is credited with several personal visitations. There are many little booths, where food, candles, and holy articles are sold during the holiday occasions.

The Poles consider it a great privilege to be per-

mitted to make a pilgrimage to Czenstochowa. No sacrifice is too great to be made in order to accomplish the journey. They will walk day after day, suffer cold and hunger, and remain here, patiently and uncomplainingly, for hour after hour during the ceremonies of the special festal occasions. Bands of pilgrims are almost constantly coming in from some direction. Sometimes hundreds and even thousands of peasants may be seen lying flat on their faces during worship, each one muttering his prayers. In places the stones are actually worn by the contact of the knees of the worshippers.

It is not a pleasant sight to attend one of these celebrations, because of the host of beggars in the most revolting conditions of deformity — sightless, earless, legless, armless, and even witless. One cannot help but feel pity for these poor people, knowing how little public provision is made for them, but the very inability to relieve any great amount of the visible misery and want is a grief in itself. After such a visit one is very glad to get away from the pitiful pleadings of these beggars for a little alms “in the name of the Mother of God.”

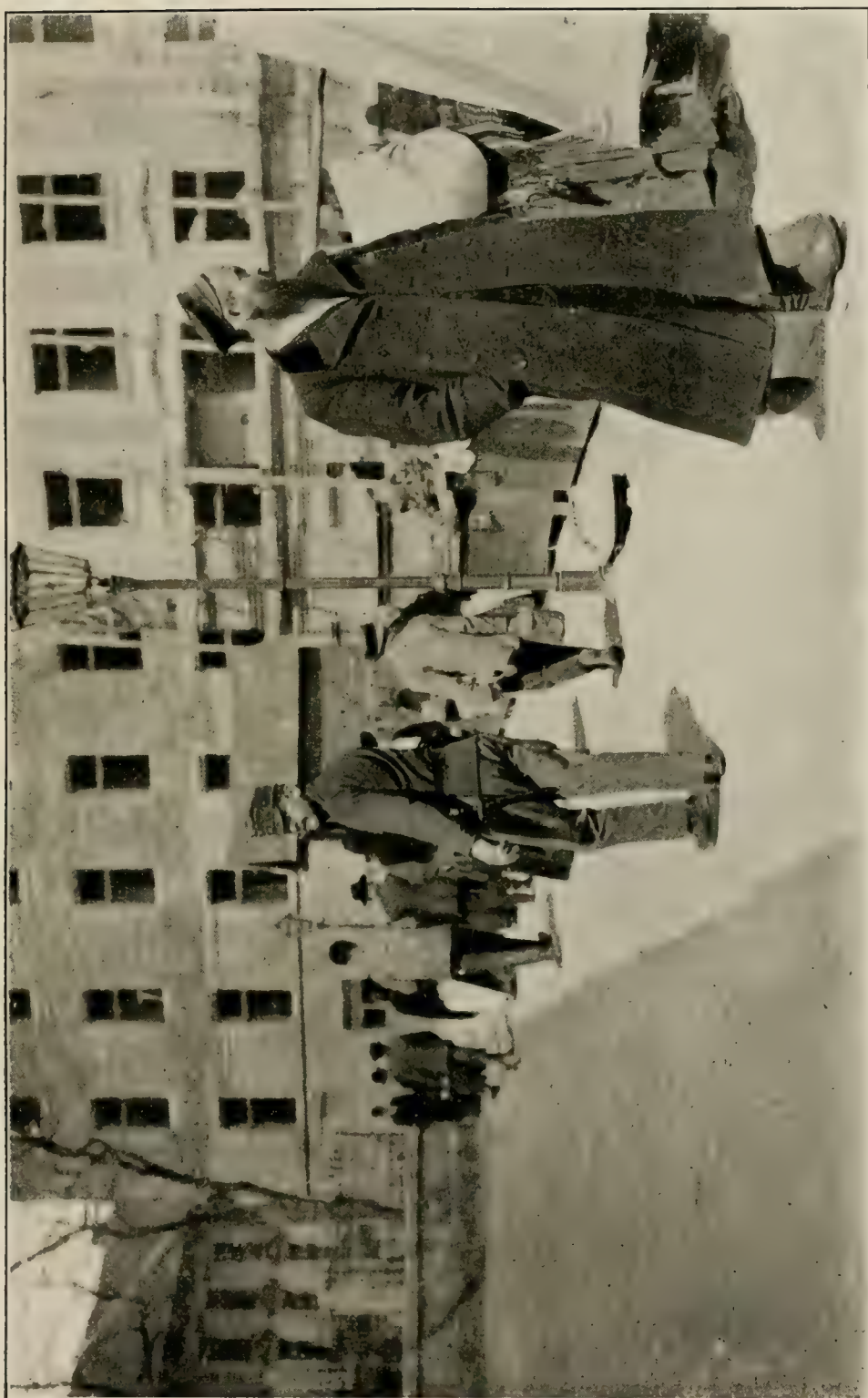
CHAPTER XVIII

THE POLISH JEW

Earlocks — Early migrations — Special privileges — The Golden Age — The Kahal — The proletariat — Repulsive villages — Ghetto — Women — Marriage broker — The Pale — Persecutions — The *halat* — The Bund — Talmudists — Rabbis — Narrow religious outlook.

“ *Oi vai!* ” (woe is me) is the Hebrew wail that will be heard frequently throughout the Pale of Settlement, which includes Russian Poland, where the world’s largest Jewish population reside. Fully one-half of the Jews in the entire world live within the territory over which Poland once exercised sovereignty. The Polish Jew is not difficult to recognize. His costume, his personal appearance, his mannerisms, all have an individuality of their own. In Galicia the most distinguishing characteristic are the earlocks, or *peasy*, two locks of hair which are allowed to grow long and hang in front of the ears. The earlocks are regarded as a mark of piety, and the Jewish boys actually shed tears when they are obliged to have them shaved off on entering the Austrian army.

“ Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard,”



A TYPICAL POLISH JEW.

is the command which the Polish Jew obeys. For many centuries he has walked about with these locks, which sometimes reach to the shoulder. A few years ago Russia issued an order forbidding the earlocks, and many Jews were taken to the police-station, where the strands of hair were forcibly clipped by the officers. To-day these emblems of piety have entirely disappeared from the Land of the Czar.

The beginning of the Jewish migration to Poland is unknown. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, the editor of which has made an exhaustive research into the subject of Polish Hebrew history, many Jews were found in Poland as early as the eighth and ninth centuries. Where these early Jews came from, whether from Prussia or Southern Russia, is not well established. The first charter, according to this authority, was issued in 905, which granted to Jews freedom of trade and autonomy in judicial matters. This was before the conversion of the rulers to Christianity. In the reign of Mieczyslaw III, the Jews were in charge of the coinage of the country, and a number of coins are still extant upon which Hebrew characters appear in addition to the name of the sovereign. All violence against them was prohibited by stringent laws.

In the eleventh century the historical records show that a number of Jews were living in Gnesen. Some of them were rich and owned Christian slaves,

as the wife of the king spent large sums of money in purchasing the liberty of these slaves. A little later a fresh influx of Jews came from Germany, and we find that special privileges are granted to them by the reigning sovereign, as money lenders. There is no record of any other business charter being granted to them, so it is fair to assume that this was their principal business even at this early date. They were allowed to charge as much as twenty-five per cent. usury.

A charter of 1264 deals with every detail of the relations of Christians and Jews in a spirit of justice. Any one who struck a Jew, despoiled a Jewish cemetery, or abducted a Jewish child was subject to a heavy fine. Throwing stones at a Hebrew school was punishable by a fine of two pounds of pepper. It was an offence to even accuse the Israelites of using Christian blood in their worship. As the Church became more powerful, however, we find that restrictions were imposed upon the Jews in certain dioceses. For instance, in Posen we find that the Jews were obliged to live in special sections, separated by a wall from their Christian neighbours; they were not allowed to appear on the streets during religious processions; they were required to wear a special cap to distinguish them; they were not allowed to keep Christian servants. At one period all the children of Israel in Poland were compelled to wear yellow caps and red patches

on their clothes to distinguish them from the rest of the population.

The Golden Age of the Jews in Poland dates from Casimir the Great (1303-70). His favour to the Jews is said to have been instigated by his love for a Jewess, named Esther. Whether this is true or not, under his long reign the Jews were very prosperous. It must have seemed like a Golden Age to the Jews of that day, who were subject to atrocious persecutions from Christians in all the neighbouring nations. Because the Poles were almost exclusively agriculturalists, Casimir felt that the Jews brought in a necessary element to form the middle class. For that reason they were allowed to enter almost every line of trade. The successors of Casimir, however, were not so broad-minded, and there are records which show a number of horrible murders of Jews. They were generally caused by religious fanaticism, as the story would be spread that the Jews had stolen a Host from some church and desecrated it. In Posen, because of an alleged desecration, a fine was imposed upon the Jews for the benefit of the Dominican church, which was collected for several centuries. Ritual murder was also alleged against them at times.

As Catholicism became more firmly established, and the power of the clergy more securely entrenched, these fanatical disturbances became more frequent. And yet the persecutions in the other

countries of Europe were so much worse that Jews continued to come into Poland as a haven of refuge. In Poland their ill treatment was only spasmodic and did not last long. Their teeth were not extracted nor their limbs amputated, as in many governments; neither were they tormented in order to force them to change their faith. In some countries women killed their children and men killed themselves to escape forcible baptism or some form of torture. It is not surprising that Jews began to hoard diamonds and other portable forms of wealth, for they were likely to be plundered at any time. It was not long until Poland became the spiritual head of all Jewdom. Most of the sovereigns, so long as they were independent, remained fairly liberal toward the Jews, but as the Diet gradually usurped the independence of the king, the lot of the Jews became harder.

The Kahal was a peculiar institution among the Jews. The government levied its taxes against the Jews as a body in the various communities, and certain ones were designated as tax collectors. The Jews gradually formed an elective body called the Kahal, the number of which varied according to the size of the communities, and the members of which were elected at the Feast of the Passover, for a period of one year. In Cracow there were forty members. At the head there were four elders who acted as judges in both civil and criminal matters,

regulated commerce, drew up marriage settlements, collected the taxes, settled conjugal disputes, etc. In Warsaw only those who paid a tax of fifteen roubles were entitled to vote. In criminal matters the courts were presided over by learned rabbis, who judged according to the laws of Moses. Thus this body gradually developed into an oligarchy, which dispensed administration and regulated the religious life of the community as well, although the two were usually kept distinct. Its power and influence were proverbial. The charitable institutions maintained by them did very good work. In many cases the action of this body was as harsh and unfeeling almost as that of the government itself could have been. After the dismemberment of Poland the Kahal gradually disappeared, although it existed in Courland down as late as 1893. There is still a sort of communal organization which has taken its place.

Although the Jews had in general remained apart from their Christian neighbours, we find that in the closing days of the nation they fought side by side with the Christian Poles. A regiment of Jewish cavalry fought in the Kosciuszko rebellion, and they must have fought desperately, for the majority of them were killed in the final stand at Praga. By that time they had begun to realize that the loss of Polish nationality meant the loss of much freedom to themselves. Their action, however, was too late.

Perhaps their previous isolation was not altogether self-chosen, as the Poles themselves did not court either social or political intercourse with their Jewish neighbours.

As a result of the influx of Jews into Poland, we find a greater proportion of Israelites in that section of the world to-day than anywhere else. They are fewer in numbers in the Prussian provinces, where they do not exceed one per cent. of the population; but in Galicia and Russian Poland they are very numerous indeed. In the town populations of some of the governments of Russian Poland, they exceed the Poles in numbers. In a few towns they reach as high a percentage as eighty or even ninety per cent. Many are well to do and prosperous, but probably four-fifths belong to the proletariat, those who suffer more or less from the economic conditions.

The Jew is one of the great problems in both Russia and Austria. He holds a sway and exercises an influence in the Russian Empire that is the more powerful because it is so silent; the more effective because it is generally unfelt. "It is," says the author of "The Polish Jew," "a silent, defenceless army, which, though always defeated, never loses, never flinches nor turns back, no matter how strong the fortress or how large the garrison arrayed against it. Always suffering, it is ever victorious; physically cowardly, it never flinches; but,

gathering up its scattered forces, stands shoulder to shoulder and man to man, vanquished by all, yet seeing all its conquerors, proud kingdoms and mighty empires though they be, crumble into forgotten dust, whilst it rises once more, with untiring patience, with a mixture of fear and valour, humility and arrogance, to confront younger nations with its insoluble problem."

Whether through choice, or the restrictions that have been placed upon him, the Polish Jew has lost his primitive taste for agriculture, and is interested wholly in barter and trade. In most communities the Jews are in such large numbers that there is not sufficient of this class of business for them. As a result they are obliged to live by their wits in the best way they can. They buy and sell everything for other people, from theatre tickets to diamonds. If a peasant brings in a load of watermelons, he will probably engage a Jewish middleman to dispose of his stock. If a landlord wishes to engage help for his farm, he will generally secure the services of a Jew. If he wishes to smuggle something across the border he will certainly employ a Jewish intermediary. In a few towns Jewish cab-drivers will be found, while there are many who work as tailors, painters, shoemakers, jewellers, stocking-knitters, toy-makers, and a few like occupations. Innkeeping is a branch of business almost monopolized by Jews in many places, but the inns are not to be recom-

mended to the fastidious. The furniture is scarce, but the dirt is plentiful.

Nothing is more repulsive than an Austrian or Russian village, the majority of whose inhabitants are Jews. The homes look anything but attractive, the streets are simply mudholes, in which the children, geese and pigs take equal delight in wallowing as it seems, and the people themselves look as though a bath was one of the first requirements. Groups of unkempt men and almost slatternly women stand around talking. The Jews do not eat pork themselves, but they raise the pigs for their Christian neighbours. The villagers seem to have nothing to do, and the lack of it does not seem to worry them. Brody is a fair example of a medium-sized Austrian town, where the majority of the seventeen or eighteen thousand inhabitants are Jews. As there are practically no restrictive laws against them here, one might expect some order, some sense of public decency. These same traits will be found carried into the old Petticoat Lane district of London, and some sections of New York. But they seem to have no public spirit, as though they preferred a parasitic existence. They have started no industries, preferring to exist only as dealers or middlemen. Haggling and bargaining is heard everywhere, even in the synagogues, and the only place exempt is in the cemeteries, where the past generations lie beneath tombstones eight or



SCENE IN THE JEWISH QUARTER, WARSAW.

ten feet high covered with inscriptions in Hebrew characters.

In Cracow, Lemberg and Warsaw, the conditions will be found better in the Jewish quarter, because the city authorities enforce at least a moderate degree of cleanliness; but even there the Ghetto is less attractive than the poor sections of the other nationalities. In Lemberg, a town fairly clean, the Jewish quarter around the market is the worst section of the city. One reason is that they are crowded together in the homes so much that it is not possible to keep the surroundings clean, and they have not yet acquired a liking for fresh air. As a rule, the atmosphere of the Ghetto is that of patience and submission. There is little laughter, and even the children are devoid of the smiles of childhood. There is almost a total absence of the street humour and gaiety to be seen in other sections of the cities. Nobody hurries, for the languor and the spirit of the Ghetto is upon all. Here and there walk men to whom the outer world means little, for they live with the law and the prophets. Moses is a more real personage to them than city magistrates, or even the czar himself.

Many of the Jewish women are very attractive, as they are generally blessed with good figures. They wear no distinctive dress, as the men do, but nearly all are adorned with huge ear-rings. In many cases they are the bosses, instead of the men,

and the husband is of the henpecked variety. Marriage occurs at a very early age — frequently at fifteen. A girl has scarcely passed the doll stage until she is called upon to take care of babies of her own. Many a woman of twenty-five is the mother of half a dozen children. As soon as married she is supposed to have her head shaved. The Talmud says that when a woman is married she has no business to please any man, as her mission in life is fulfilled. As a woman's hair is one of her chief charms, she must sacrifice it. The original intention seems to have been that they should wear a close-fitting cap, but the Jewesses long ago began to wear wigs on their shaved heads. Thousands of these wigs will be found among the strictly orthodox Jews, but a natural (and excusable) vanity has saved many a beautiful head of hair. Among the more progressive Jews, even those who are orthodox in most things, this custom has generally disappeared.

The position of woman is rather paradoxical. A very strict Talmudist will not sit down to eat with his wife, or take food from a woman's hands. In some households the father and sons sit down first and are served by the women, who eat afterwards. Generally, however, the two sexes eat together, although the men frequently sit on one side of the table and the women on the other. The men are exempt from compulsory bathing, but the women

must take the *mykva*, or ritualistic bath. The women do not have to say so many prayers as the men, and they do not strap the Laws of Moses, written on parchment, on their heads and arms, as the men do when praying on week-days. The custom grows out of the command: "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets before thine eyes." The Talmud even allows a man to punish his wife if she curses him or speaks slightly of his parents.

A boy of fourteen and a girl of thirteen already begin to think of getting married. The *shadchan*, marriage broker, advertises the piety, housewifely talents and good looks of the girls on his list among the parents with marriageable sons. The young people most interested are seldom consulted. When the dowry has been arranged, the marriage soon takes place. It usually occurs in the evening, by the light of lanterns, which the guests hold. Some poor families will almost starve themselves in order to have some dainty or a bottle of wine for the occasion. Hops are thrown after the bride for prosperity. A marriage contract is usually drawn up which sets forth the details of the arrangement. A clause frequently sets forth the length of time the young couple are to live with the parents of each. If the boy is destined for a rabbi, he has no difficulty in making a good match. The father-in-law will undertake to look after the family so that the boy can

continue his studies of the Talmud. To be left an "old maid" of twenty-five is a terrible misfortune both for the girl and the parents, and the girls must be married in the order of their ages. Parenthood is the great career. A prayer is uttered over each girl baby that a pious man may some day take her to wife, and a messiah may be among her sons. Divorce is not a difficult matter if the husband decides to take that course, but the divorced wife must be given back half of the dowry she brought with her. The wife also has her recourse to divorce from an undesirable husband.

In Russia, the Jews are confined to what is called the Pale of Settlement. This includes a broad strip of land along the western border of Russia in which is the original Kingdom of Poland, as it was called, and ten other governments. Outside of that they are only allowed to live by special permission, with the exception of a few exempt classes. Warsaw and Odessa probably have the largest Jewish population, but Vilna, Kiev, Kishinev, and many other cities also have a large number of Jewish inhabitants. The cruelties which they have been compelled to undergo belong rather to the history of Russia, and have been treated in the author's work, "The Russian Empire of To-day and Yesterday."

It is no wonder that the Jewish children in Russia are afraid of the cross. "I was afraid of the cross," says the author of "The Promised Land"

in her remarkable autobiography, "for it was the cross that made the priests, and the priests made our troubles, as even some Christians admitted. The Gentiles said that we had killed their God, which was absurd, as they never had a God — nothing but images (meaning the Russian icons). Besides, what they accused us of had happened so long ago; the Gentiles themselves said it was long ago. Everybody had been dead for ages who could have had anything to do with it. . . . To worship the cross and to torment a Jew was the same thing to them. That is why we feared the cross. Another thing the Gentiles said about us was that we used the blood of murdered Christian children at the Passover festival. Of course, that was a wicked lie. It made me sick to think of such a thing. I knew everything that was done for the Passover, from the time I was a very little girl."

And yet it was just such teaching that caused the massacre at Kishinev, in 1903, and the "pogroms" at Odessa and other cities in the four or five years following. I have heard many tales from eye-witnesses of those horrible events. "I cursed the church in my heart every time I had to pass it," continues this author, "and yet I was afraid — afraid. . . . I knew how to dodge and cringe and dissemble before I knew the names of the seasons. And I had plenty of time to ponder on these things because I was so idle. If they had let me go to

school, now:— But of course, they didn't." Only a small percentage of the Jewish children are permitted to attend the public schools and universities.

The Russian might well be referred to the verses of the late Joaquin Miller, of which one stanza reads as follows:

“ Who taught you tender Bible tales
Of honey-lands, of milk and wine,
Of happy, peaceful Palestine,
Of Jordan's holy harvest-vales?
Who gave the patient Christ, I say?
Who gave you Christian creed? Yea, Yea,
Who gave your very God to you?
The Jew! The Jew! The hated Jew! ”

The Russian Jew looks very much like his Austrian brother, except that he is not permitted to wear the corkscrew curls and has dispensed with the old top-hat and furry turban. But he still wears the *halat*, a long coat fastened as far as the waist with many hooks and reaching to the ankle; in the sleeves of this he buries his hands, if he does not fold them across his stomach or clasp them at his back. This habit, and the stooping, slouching gait, accentuates the consumptive appearance so frequently remarked upon by writers. He looks neither more nor less miserable than his brother across the border. One would not think that he had any fear either of expulsion or cruel treatment. Neither is he any dirtier than the other. In that respect the two are on a par. The required army

service is his worst trial. In addition to the fact that he is serving a government that persecutes his race, there is the necessity of breaking the Jewish laws of daily life, work on the Sabbath, and eat food that is not kosher (clean). Then, in addition, most of them are married by the age of twenty-one, which is the age of conscription. Men have been known to submit to operations which cause them great suffering, in the hopes of escaping service.

In Austria the lot of the Jew is better, for the laws grant him practical freedom; and yet here one will find that every man's hand is against him to some extent, for in Cracow and Lemberg I have seen them hooted at in the streets and jostled by groups of young boys, so that life is not the pleasantest. No one seems to want his company, and, for that matter, he does not seek the company of others than his own race. If the persecution becomes worse, one will hear that Hebrew wail of "*Oi vai!*" for he does not retaliate. He is all servility and humility. Nevertheless, the Polish Jew seems to be fairly well contented, for he walks along the street lightly swinging his little stick, smoking his thin cigarettes, and winding his curls almost lovingly about his finger. Some of the wealthier ones wear silk hats, dress in European clothes, and assume an air of prosperity which is impossible with the majority of the Jews.

As a rule the Jew is law-abiding and peaceable,

but in Russia one finds that the Jewish Bund is one of the most active revolutionary societies in that turbulent empire. This organization has taken an active part in the fight for political freedom which has been waged in that empire for the last decade. It grew as a self-protecting body against the "pogroms," in which so many Jews were killed, or lost their all. Funds have been furnished for Russian anarchistic propaganda, and arms have been surreptitiously provided for those Jews who were willing to bear them. The Bund works with the mystery characteristic of the East; many hated police officers and government officials have become its victims. Its ultimate aim is the overthrow of czarism and the establishment of a democratic government. In this respect its purposes coincide with those of all other revolutionary societies in Russia. Strikes of workmen have been instigated by it, and efforts have been made to stir up disaffection in the army and navy. One effect upon Jewish life has undoubtedly been to take the minds of the Jewish proletariat from the past and fix it upon a better future in the land where it lives.

In his religious views the Polish Jew is extremely narrow. He is a strict Talmudist, looking to that strange record of priestly learning and philosophy for a guidance in every act of life. In the minute observance of traditional rites he seeks balm for his wounds. To him they stand in the place of father-

land and nationality. If an animal is killed, and there is anything unusual about it, the matter must be submitted to the rabbi; if a drop of pure milk should fall upon a piece of absolutely clean meat, the latter can not be eaten until it is pronounced *kosher*. He would not buy bread from a Gentile baker, unless the latter had a certificate from a rabbi that his flour is clean and free from all impurities, and has not come in contact with lard or any other fat. For the preparation of the thin cakes used at the Passover, the wheat is carefully watched from the time it is in flower. It is threshed under watchful eyes, and the grain is put into sealed bags until needed for the Passover. These cakes must be baked by men, as women may not touch the cakes in the making. A strict Jew would not eat food which is *tryfny*, that is, food not prepared according to the prescribed rites. The Jewish Sabbath is very strictly observed, and is ushered in with singing and prayer.

An entire book could be filled with an account of these and many other customs which still keep the Polish Jew a man apart from the rest of the population among whom he lives. Many of them are not only strange but really repulsive, especially those in connection with the burial of the dead, having no better authority than some long-deceased rabbi who saw fit to write them, and they have now found a place in the Talmud. They were probably based on

crude ideas of sanitation and cleanliness, but to-day they serve no other purpose than to keep their observers wrapped up in ignorance and superstition.

As might well be surmised, the rabbi is a very important individual among the Polish Jews. It is the duty of the rabbi to see that the people follow the prescribed ceremonies. From birth to the grave he is the law and the prophet to his chosen people. A settlement would not exist long without a rabbi, and when one religious leader dies another is soon secured. In Warsaw, although there are only a dozen synagogues, there are several hundred "Houses of Prayer" presided over by rabbis. There is a college of rabbis, called the *Rabbinat*, composed of the spiritual heads of the twelve communal synagogues. Each rabbi presides over the *Rabbinat* one month in the year according to the Jewish calendar. The pay of a rabbi is not usually large, but he is at least given a home and food, and, no matter how poor or dirty, he is a man looked up to and respected in the community.

The language of the Polish Jews is known as the Yiddish. When the German Jews came into Poland they brought with them a corrupt Hebrew-German jargon, to which many Polish words have been added. It has grown up thus, a patchwork of many elements, and has become with these outcast people as a national language. The orthodox Jews use Polish or Russian only when they are compelled to

do so by the exigencies of trade. It has helped to preserve the feeling of exclusiveness. As the Jews generally know Russian and Polish, their linguistic accomplishments are frequently of great aid in making a livelihood.

General education is at a comparatively low ebb among the Polish Jews. The orthodox Jews are usually satisfied with the *cheder*, which is generally in the poor quarters of the master. Here the teacher in his long robe teaches his pupils some Hebrew learning and the Scriptures. The teacher reads a passage, which his pupils repeat after him. All of this creates a great hubbub. Most girls, however, do not have the opportunity to attend the *cheder*, the percentage usually being less than ten. In Russia only from three to ten per cent. of students in the public institutions may be Jews. But, as a member of the professions is exempted from the restrictions of residence, the Jews are anxious to educate their children, and the applicants for admission are very numerous indeed. Only the brightest minds are usually able to gain admission, and as a result they win more than their proportion of the honours.

The old conservative Jew looks upon the study of the Talmud as the only fit occupation, and views modern ideas of education with horror. Many a boy has been turned out of the home because, after learning the Talmud by heart, he wanted to read

something more worldly. The exchanging of his long coat for a short coat by a young Jew has brought consternation in many a household. For these trifling things, the parents will mourn their sons as worse than dead, and hang their heads in the presence of their friends as if in disgrace. But how proud the happy father is whose son is destined for a rabbi. He need never work; he is spared from the sweating shop and the hated factory. No matter how dirty or how poor, he will be sought after by parents with marriageable daughters. At the age of thirteen he is received into the synagogue with ceremony, for his father is no longer responsible for his sins. He must now observe the fasts himself, and perform the same religious duties as his elders. He must pray many times a day, and he cannot break his fast without saying a short prayer both before and after eating. If the youthful rabbi can discover some new explanation for an obscure passage in the Talmud, or hold his own in discussions with the elders, his future is assured and his parents are elated.

In the synagogue scores of men sit all day poring over Hebrew books, and disputing among themselves. This is their idea of scholarship. Some of them have developed a deep mysticism, and many miracle-workers have been reputed among these orthodox Jews. Disease is often treated by so-called pious men or women with prayers and incan-

tations. Messianic prophets have been almost without number. A few thousand of Jews, known as the Karaites, reject the Talmud, and are practically ostracized by their brethren.

It would be difficult to find a people of any faith more devoted to their religion than the average Jews of Austrian or Russian Poland. The new arrivals in the United States exhibit the same characteristics, but the second generation has wandered away from the strictness of their fathers, especially if they settle in a community where there is not a large Jewish population. In the Ghetto of New York will probably be seen the closest observance of the religious customs of the Polish Jews to be found in the United States. A continuous stream of fresh arrivals serves to keep alive the old faith in all its narrowness. The costume is discarded, however, the earlocks are cut off, but beards remain, and the wigs which cover the shaved heads of the women can readily be recognized. An almost entire absence of religious faith of any kind seems to take possession of the second generation, as commercial prosperity and the ambition for wealth takes its place. The one extreme seems to follow the desertion of the other extreme, and the future alone can tell its final effect on the character of the Polish Jews. In many individual cases the result has been unfortunate, as the records of the criminal courts and the underworld reveal.

CHAPTER XIX

LITERATURE AND ART

Early legends — Reformation — Latin poets — First printing press — Peter Skarga — Copernicus — Effect of partitionings — Niemcewicz — Mickiewicz — Slowacki — Krasinski — "Pan Tadeusz" — Lelewal — Sienkiewicz — The "Trilogy" — Newspapers — Painters — Chopin — Paderewski — Madam Modjeska.

THE Slav mind furnishes excellent material for the building up of genuine literature. There is a quickness and fancy quite unexpected by those familiar only with the political history. It generally reveals a straining after distant ideals, reveling in the sheer delight of wandering in the regions of the unknown. Danger and severe discipline seemed to give a freer flight to thought and imagination. The literature of Poland has been greatly influenced by the political denationalization of the country. Prior to that event the country does not furnish us with any great or remarkable works.

In Poland there is an absence of the legendary poetry and celebration of national heroes common among the Slav people. Throughout all of Russia we meet an endless series of legends, called "bylini," the "things that were," in each of which there is a moral to leave the reader thinking. Some of these date earlier than the time of Vladimir, while

others are not a quarter of a century old. The Ukraine is a rich source of folk-songs and folk-lore. With all the imaginative and idealistic characteristics of the Poles, we find little of this early folk-lore among the records that are left. If such existed, the works have not been handed down to the succeeding generations. They may have been lost or, perhaps, destroyed by the clerical authorities as irreligious. The upheavals caused by the Reformation, which appeared so prominently in the nations of Western Europe, had little effect in Poland. As a matter of fact it had little influence among any of the Slav people, with the exception of the Bohemians, who were greatly affected by the Hussite movement, which waged for at least two centuries in that country.

Much of the early literature in Poland was written in the Latin tongue, for that language was used by the court in its official utterances, as well as by the clergy. The Latin spoken and written in Poland is said to have been as pure as in Rome itself. One Martin Gallus wrote in that tongue as early as the twelfth century. Prior to the fourteenth century nothing in Polish is preserved, with the exception of some very insignificant fragments. A printing press had been established in Cracow as early as 1474, but the first book in Polish was not printed until 1521. Hence we find two of the earliest writers who are worthy of mention, Nicholas Rej

(1505-1559) and John Koschanovski (1530-1584), made their entry into the field of literature as Latin poets. The same may be said of Casimir Sarbiewski, who wrote in the seventeenth century, and was designated by the Pope as laureate. All of these writers seemed to write only for the nobles, for the peasantry were too ignorant to appreciate literature. Many of the clergy wrote Latin, and their themes are naturally the Church and the preservation of the Catholic faith among the people. One priest, Orzechowski, was affected by the Reformation, and has left some stirring polemics. His writings were included in the Papal Index Expurgatus, and he was declared to be "a servant of the devil."

Peter Skarga, also a priest, delivered some wonderful sermons before the Diet, in which he did not mince the truth in dealing with the national weakness. He plainly foretold the downfall of their country as a consequence of their perpetual feuds. Skarga was a Jesuit and an ardent churchman, but he was a Polish patriot and opposed corruption in both secular and religious life. It would have been well for the Poles if they had listened to some of his fiery eloquence. He was the court preacher of Sigismund III, and has left behind a host of sermons and religious works. He is thought by Polish critics to have raised the prose style of the language to a high standard of excellence. He had much to

do with stamping out Calvinism and Orthodoxy in Poland. An idea of the influence of Protestantism at this time may be gained by a complaint of Skarga that two thousand Romanist churches had been converted to Protestant places of worship. A complete Protestant Bible had already been published at Brzesc and at Dantzic. Historical works in Latin also began to appear at this period.

The name of the author of the Copernican System, which first taught that the sun was a fixed body and the centre of the solar system, is highly honoured among the Poles. Nikolaus Kappernik was born in Thorn in 1473, but he changed the spelling of his name to the Latin form of Copernicus, which was a common custom in that day. His father was a wholesale trader, and had Jewish ancestors. He was destined for the Church by his mother, and was educated in the University of Cracow. Although deeply religious, he was early attracted by mathematics, but also studied medicine. This was the age of great discoveries of new lands, and these things caused Copernicus to study the heavenly bodies. But the Church frowned upon any new theories, and Copernicus worked in secret. He taught mathematics in Cracow and in Rome, where he also lectured on astronomy in 1500. He developed what later became trigonometry. He was devoted to the Church, and even preached for a while himself. But he was constantly studying astronomy.

The Church would not allow Copernicus to speak in public, except on subjects approved by them. All the time, however, he was working on his great work, “*De Orbium Celestium Revolutionibus*,” which set forth his theories. This work was forty years in the making and completely upset the old Ptolemaic theory. During the greater part of this time there was not a day or night passed in which something was not added. It was practically finished in 1530, but he withheld it from publication for fear of persecution. At last the manuscript was sent to Nuremberg, where there was greater freedom, and he paid for the publication. It was dedicated to Pope Paul III. The printed book reached him in 1543, just a few days before his death, although he had up to that time enjoyed good health. He had just consciousness enough to recognize the printed form of the work of his life. The death angel thus removed the old astronomer from all danger of persecution for heresy, and now statues stand in his honour in many places. He is buried in the town of his birth.

The period of political decay during the last century of national existence did not bring out a virile literature. Literature in general descended into the same abyss as the leaders of politics. A few patriotic writers arose, but they could not make themselves heard. One of the most energetic of these patriotic writers was Kollataj (1750-1812). He did



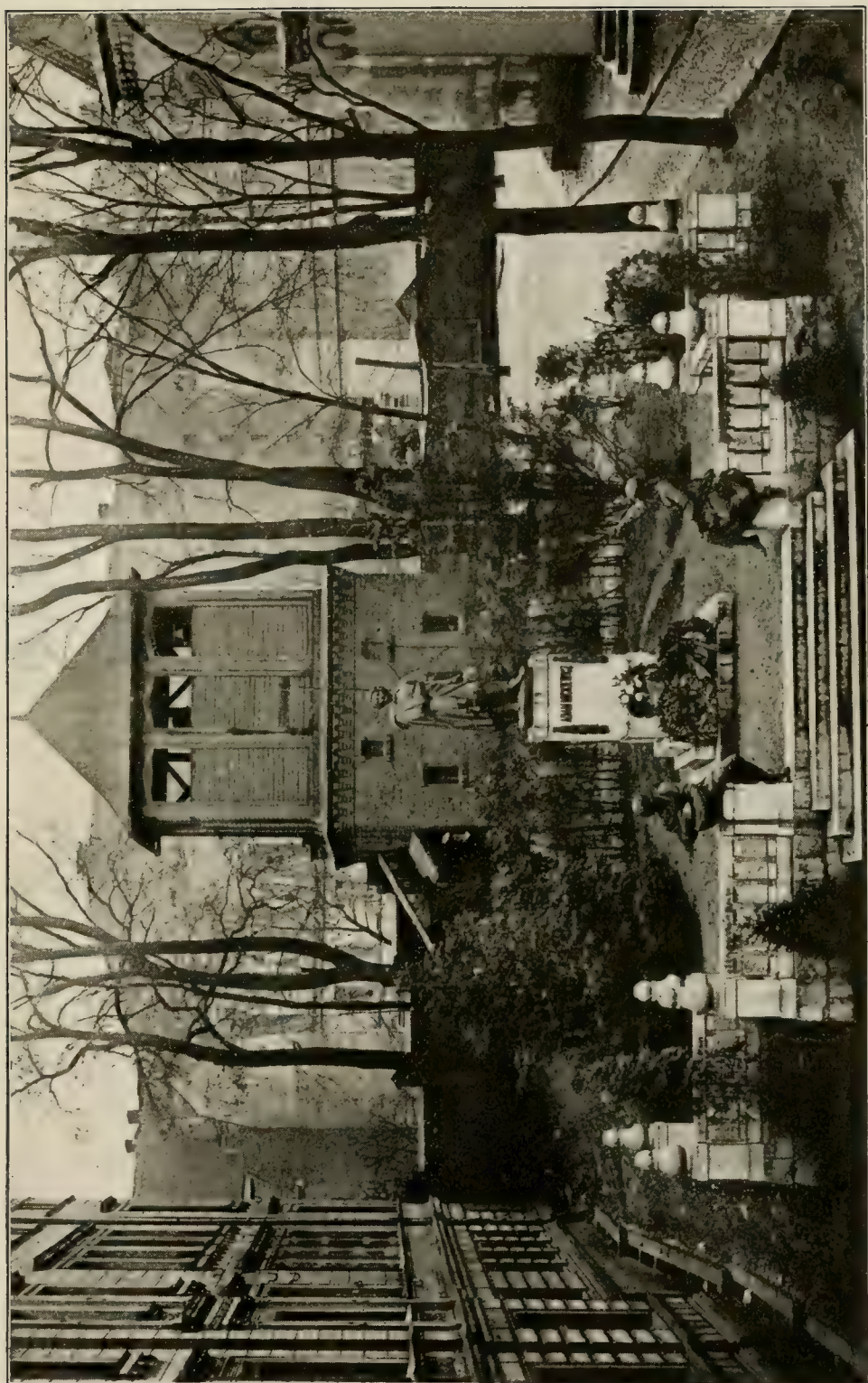
NIKOLAUS COPERNICUS.

his best to arouse the people from their lethargy. He fought in the defence of his country, and suffered eight years' imprisonment in an Austrian prison. Following the partitioning of Poland there comes a period when literary as well as national life passes through a period of stagnation. It is really not to be wondered at that a cessation of the intellectual development of the people followed such an event. Many of the writers were included in the large number of exiles who were sent away to Siberia, and some of them were even banished to far-away Kamschatka. Some of these exiles afterwards escaped and emigrated to France and Italy; others fled to those countries upon their release from imprisonment. A greater period of literary activity was destined to follow.

The richest and most fruitful period in Polish literature began as early as the first quarter of the last century. Literature seemed to supply, to some extent, the feeling of deprivation brought about by the loss of a national existence. Especially was that true of poetry. Literature, likewise, gained in its spirit of exaltation, even if it lost in variety of theme. The literature of that period is idealistic in its tendencies, and rivals the French in its capriciousness. It has great vivacity, but little of the shrewd political sense which is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic literature. Its idealism swept away all barriers, and it is filled with the most

fantastic day-dreams. The poets seem to feel as though it was their mission to give the people a spiritual tonic and spiritual nourishment. One is surprised at the love of the ideal expressed in their writings, and the high level attained by them. The national character of Poland was well adapted to the development of the most intense spirit of romanticism. It swept away all barriers in its course. Mysticism also grew, both because of the native religious intensity and the oppression of the Russian censor.

Julian Niemcewicz, a friend of Kosciuszko, and his companion in captivity, is a writer of merit who is of interest to Americans. He was born in Lithuania in 1758, and lived to the good old age of four score and four years. On the disintegration of his country Niemcewicz fled to the United States, as he had been an active member of the four-years parliament. In it his voice was always raised for the common people. He lived here for ten years and married a rich American widow. He returned to Warsaw and again entered into the political life, serving as secretary of the Polish Senate. After the disastrous revolution of 1830 he went to Paris, where he died in 1841. He wrote odes, epigrams, plays, fables and novels, and translated many works from English into his native tongue. A patriotic comedy, "The Return of the Deputy," achieved great success. His writings have not been so last-



STATUE OF ADAM MICKIEWICZ, POSEN.

ing, but they were very popular in their day and had great influence. Anton Malczewski (1793-1826) was the author of one of the most popular poems among the Poles, called "Marja," a tale of the Ukraine. Malczewski met Byron, who was about the same age, and was greatly influenced by the English poet.

The man who is the recognized laureate of Poland is Adam Mickiewicz. A great monument has been erected to this poet in Cracow, which is really a tribute from the whole nation. Stately memorials have also been erected in Posen and Warsaw. He was born in a little town in Lithuania, not far from Vilna, in 1798, and was descended from an old noble family. Many of his productions are based upon the legends of his own country. One of these is "Grazyna," which describes the wars between the old knights and the heathen Lithuanians. Like many poets Mickiewicz had a romance which greatly influenced him. He had, for a long time, been in love with a Polish maiden, but his union with her was forbidden. This caused him to become a voluntary exile, going to Rome, and he never again sought the lady. The memory of her, however, is immortalized in his chief work — "Pan Tadeusz." Mickiewicz fell under the same influences as Byron, and there is quite a marked resemblance in the themes of some of his poems to those chosen by the English poet. In 1829, when Mickiewicz was only thirty

years of age, he visited Goethe in company with a literary friend. He was greatly attracted by the German poet, but being intensely religious himself, he could not understand or appreciate the theology of Goethe. To him Goethe seemed to be without a God. There is an irresistible fountain of freshness in the writings of Mickiewicz which can be seen in the "Ode to Youth" and "Faris."

Like many of the other literary lights of Poland, Mickiewicz fell under the political ban, and with several companions was arrested by the Russian authorities. He was in prison for a number of months, but afterwards served in some of the government departments of Russia in a minor capacity. During this period he produced several works. His literary talent had already been recognized and he met Alexander Pushkin, the leading Russian poet at that time, and the two became fast friends. They were of just the same age. Each has left in verse an appreciation of the other, and they are now considered the two greatest Slav poets. The best Russian society was opened to him, even in the capital. Many high Russian ladies carried their enthusiasm so far as to take lessons in Polish from the poet.

Julius Slowacki, born in 1809, was a contemporary of Mickiewicz. He had been educated in the same institution, the University of Vilna, and was employed in one of the government departments at Warsaw. In the university he imbibed the exalted

patriotism of the age. He became involved in the revolutionary movement of 1830, and left Poland upon its collapse, never again to return. These two contemporary poets both resided for a long time in Paris. But Slowacki seemed at all times to entertain a feeling of jealousy toward Mickiewicz, who had the greater reputation, and he refused to recognize the poetic ability in his rival. Mickiewicz thought there was no God in Slowacki's poetry, and criticized it on that account. Although the two occasionally met at the homes of mutual friends, they never developed an intimacy. One of the greatest of Slowacki's works is "Dziady," and another notable one is "The Plague in the Desert," which is all tragedy. An Arab describes how his four sons, three daughters, and his wife were taken from him by the plague, and does so in simple and eloquent words. He revels in his descriptions of the horrible cruelty which characterized the age of which he writes. Perhaps the misfortunes of his own life caused him to dwell upon such themes as prisons, banishments and punishments. He pictures the scenes with which his own sad life was filled. He died in 1849.

Sigismund Krasinski was another contemporary of these two writers. He was born in Paris in 1812, the son of a Polish noble. Despair seemed to fill his soul. He felt himself obliged to give up the woman he loved and marry the girl selected by his father,

according to the Polish custom. His father had entered the Russian service, and was looked upon as a deserter of the patriotic cause by the Poles. Sigismund did not approve of this, but his loyalty to his father prevented him from following his own inclinations. He saw no hope for his fatherland, and found no consolation in religion. The latter part of his life was also filled with intense physical suffering, and he died before his fiftieth year. "Temptation" is one of his finest poems. His writings show a loftiness of soul, even if not a healthfulness. "The Godless Comedy" is another of his noteworthy works.

"Pan Tadeusz" is pronounced by many critics to be the best poetical work in the literature of Poland, and the only great epic of the last century. It is the attempt of this poet to give an epic which should show the national culture of his country during the period in which he himself lived. Entwined with a slender love story, it is a picture of Polish life at the time of Napoleon's invasion in 1812. It portrays the life of the nobles, their luxury and dissipation, the family feuds and the excessive hospitality. In this way he broke away from the traditions of most epic writers who have portrayed ages with which they were familiar only by reading. He has thus given us beings who existed, and most of whom still exist to this day. The sub-title of the poem is "The Last Raid in Lithuania." It treats

of the custom of determining litigation between families in that Grand Duchy. In descriptions of scenery Mickiewicz will rank with the best English poets, and in these he showed his greatest power. There is not a sight or sound to be met with in Lithuania that is not touched upon somewhere in his writings.

“ In *Pan Tadeusz*,” says Mr. Brandes, “ Poland possesses the only successful epic our century has produced. The good star of Mickiewicz ordained that this time he should not go back to the remote past in order to produce something epic. Hence he succeeded in seeing the heroic in his own age.”

Mickiewicz had to endure poverty the greater part of his life, and especially after his marriage in 1834. For that reason his later years were not very productive, and he wrote no more poetry. He taught and lectured to support his invalid wife and six children. He edited a newspaper in Paris at one time. In 1852 Napoleon III rescued him from dire poverty, and secured for him a position as librarian. In 1855 he was sent on a mission to Constantinople, having another Pole as his companion. Many Polish nobles were then living among the Turks. This mission seems to have been both literary and political. The political part was to organize a legion of the Poles living there to fight Russia. His mission was unsuccessful in every way. His

system became undermined and he contracted the cholera, then raging there, and died on the 26th of November. His remains were eventually brought to the Cathedral in Cracow, where they rest among Poland's other great men who have passed away. Great crowds attended the obsequies, and the Russian government even relaxed its passport vigilance in honour of the occasion.

Poland has had many historians during her long history, but the chief of all is Lelewal (1786-1861). Of German descent this man became an ardent Polish patriot. He was born in Warsaw, and spent his early life there and at Vilna. He wrote many historical works concerning his own and other countries. During the revolution of 1830, Lelewal became one of the ministers in the temporary government. After the collapse of that movement, he went to Paris and later to Brussels. In the latter city he spent the last years of his life in extreme poverty. His literary labours were prodigious, but they afforded him only a scant livelihood. His independence caused him to refuse all aid from friends, for he would rather live in want than be dependent. His life is only another striking example of the calamities that have befallen many eminent literary geniuses. The Poles are rightfully proud of their greatest historian.

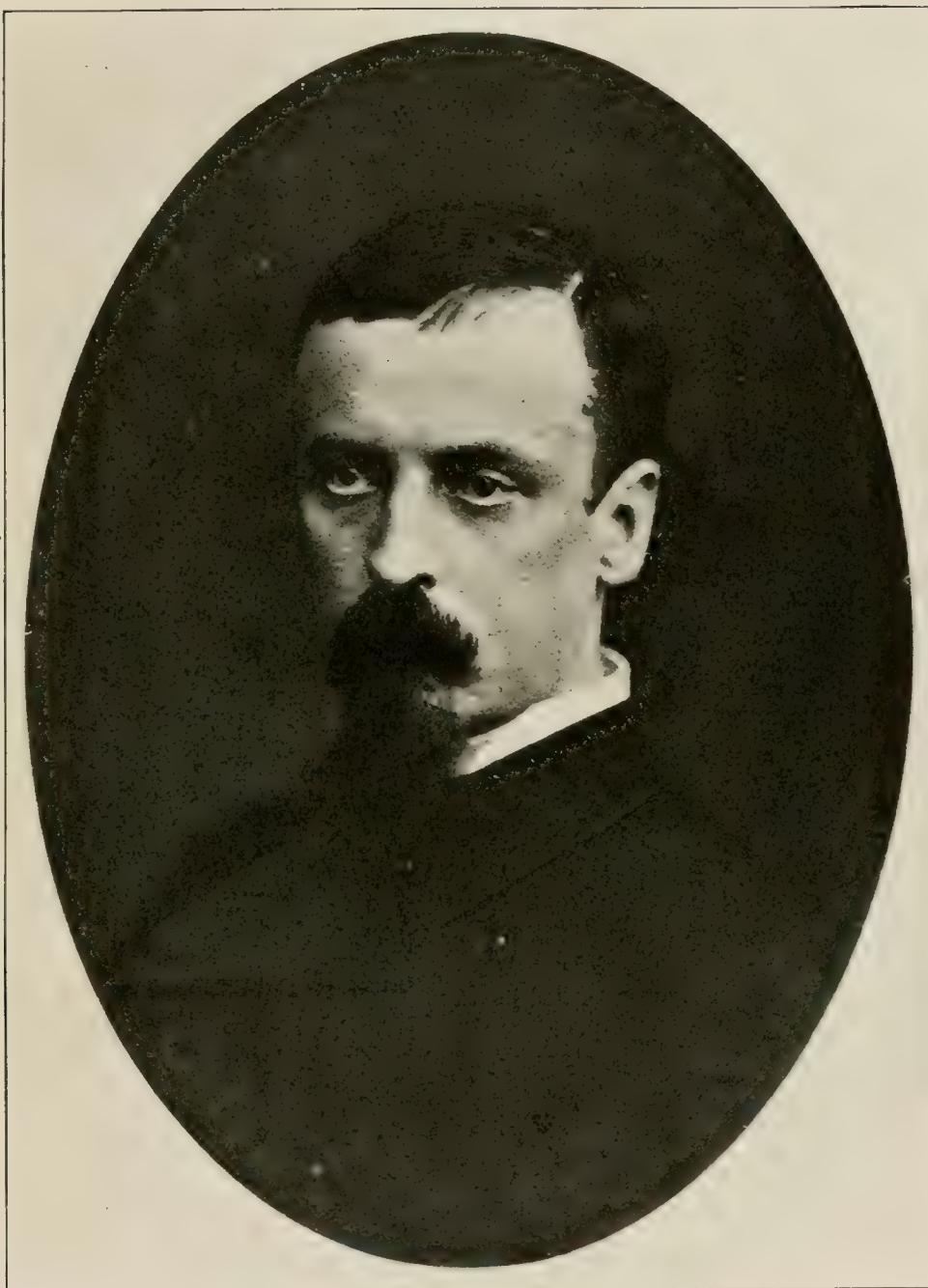
The writer who is regarded most highly by the Poles of to-day is the novelist, Henryk Sienkie-

wicz, whose best-known work in America is "Quo Vadis," that famous novel of the time of Nero which created such a stir when it first appeared. He was born in Siedlce, Russian Poland, in 1846. His mother was a poetess, and from her he undoubtedly inherited his literary taste and ability. Sienkiewicz lived in the United States for a while in the seventies, when he joined a colony established by Madam Modjeska, the famous actress, in California. As a result he has written some criticisms of America that have hurt the supersensitive. When the first Duma was elected in Russia, in 1906, Sienkiewicz was chosen as a member of that body, but he declined to serve, for he had already experienced, in a mild way, the displeasure of the Russian government.

To the Poles Sienkiewicz is not known so much as the author of the popular novel, "Quo Vadis," but as the author of a number of volumes whose bases are the striking and romantic history of their own country. They look upon him as their first real interpreter to the world. He seems to consider it as his task to reproduce for the people the past, when Poland still existed as a nation, and he describes many of the scenes during the most unhappy period of Poland's history. The best known works are the three novels, "With Fire and Sword," "The Deluge," and "Pan Michael," all of which treat of the resistance of the Poles to invaders. Upon these

three works — known as the Trilogy — the author has really staked his reputation. “Without Dogma” is a psychological story; “Children of the Soil” deals with the hollowness of modern life; “The Family of Polaniecke,” “The Knights of the Cross,” and “On the Field of Glory” are the titles of three other works written by him. His writings in some respects might be compared to those of Dumas and Scott, but sometimes they become a little too tedious in their descriptions, for in length they compare with the works of Thackeray. His writings have had at least one good effect, for all Poles, who are able to read at all, read the novels of Sienkiewicz, and he writes in the purest Polish. Thus the Poles in Austria, Germany and Russia are drawn together by their love of this writer and their fascination for his writings, so that he has helped in no small measure to counteract the effects of both Germany and Russia to suppress and supplant the Polish tongue.

If any one wishes to see a pen picture of Polish history, he can do no better than to read the three books of the Trilogy, all of which appear in good English translations. They show in a vivid way what a descriptive work does so inadequately, the excessive pride of the Poles in their birth, the lawlessness which existed in the Ukraine, the slight regard which both Poles and Cossacks had for human life, and the lack of cohesion which finally resulted



Courtesy of Little, Brown, & Company.

HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ.

in the disintegration of all national life. Battles and personal encounters filled with heroism stand out prominently on almost every page. He has gathered up national types and the threads of national character, and has woven them together in these three works. He has painted human beings, not gods, although he has naturally laid great stress on the princely characteristics of the Polish nobles. Pan Yan, or Skrzetuski, is an instance of this. One interesting character in "With Fire and Sword" is old Zagloba, a sort of Polish Falstaff. He is the same sort of a boastful and crafty character, with a shrewd tongue, like unto Shakespeare's creation, only he has real courage when compelled by force of conditions to exercise it, as his numerous encounters prove. In appetite for food and drink he is even greater than Falstaff, for he could quaff a gallon of liquor with true Polish ease, and for that reason was the envy of many.

In spite of the difficulties under which Polish literature labours, owing to a dismembered country, the amount of it that appears is very large. There are four active centres — Cracow, Lemberg, Warsaw and Posen. The smallest amount appears at the last named city, because it has been more completely denationalized. Many editions of old and almost forgotten Polish authors are being issued under the patronage of the University of Cracow. A number of excellent reviews, fully up to the Eng-

lish and German standards, are issued. Of these the *Ataneum* and *Bibliotaka Warszawska*, of Warsaw, and the *Przegland Wszechpolski*, of Cracow, probably take the lead. The *Tygodnik Illustowany*, published in Warsaw, is an illustrated weekly popular with Poles the world over, and the *Bluszcz* (Ivy), of the same place, is an old journal for women. The *Praca* (Work), of Posen, is an able weekly, strongly anti-German in its tendencies. There are also many special periodicals, and the Polish Jews have a number of journals of their own.

Of the daily press the *Gazeta Warszawski* (Warsaw Gazette) was founded in 1761, and is still influential. The *Kurjer Warszawski* (Warsaw Courier) has reached an age of seventy-five years. It has a high literary standard, and exemplifies the very best in Polish dailies. It is edited in a dignified style, and contains all the news permitted by the Russian censor. The *Dziennik Posnanski* (Posen Daily) and *Goniac Wielkopolski* (Messenger of Great Poland) are the leading patriotic Polish dailies of Posen. The *Czas* (Times), of Cracow, is one of the best known of the Polish press. It is an old and conservative newspaper, and is the organ of the rich nobility of Austrian Poland. The *Nowa Reforma* (New Reform) is liberal and patriotic, pro-Austrian but anti-German, and anti-Russian, and is widely read. In Lemberg appear the *Slowo Polskie* (Polish Word) and *Kurjer Lwowski* (Lemberg

Courier). The former is a high-class journal, liberal but anti-socialistic, while the latter is more radical.

The artistic sense of the Poles extends to all branches of art. In music, painting, and the drama they are alike pre-eminent. The most noted painter was undoubtedly Jan Matejko, who was the painter of Polish history. No artist ever went to greater pains to be historically accurate. He would study his subject for weeks and months, and would go to any length in order to be correct in the portrayal of a historical character. Some of his canvases contain as many as a couple of hundred figures, each one a different type from all the others. "The Prussians Bringing Tribute," "The Battle of Grünwald," "Sobieski before Vienna," and "The Demon of Skarga," are four of his leading works. The last named received a noted French prize when exhibited in Paris in 1864. It portrays the priest Skarga predicting the downfall of the country if the internal anarchy is not ended. The varying expression on the faces of his hearers is an interesting study. Matejko lived and worked in Cracow, where he founded the Academy of Painting. He was, as his works reveal, an ardent patriot, and most of his work was done without reward.

Arthur Gröttger is another painter whose works are highly appreciated by the Poles, but his productions are not numerous. The Polish painters of

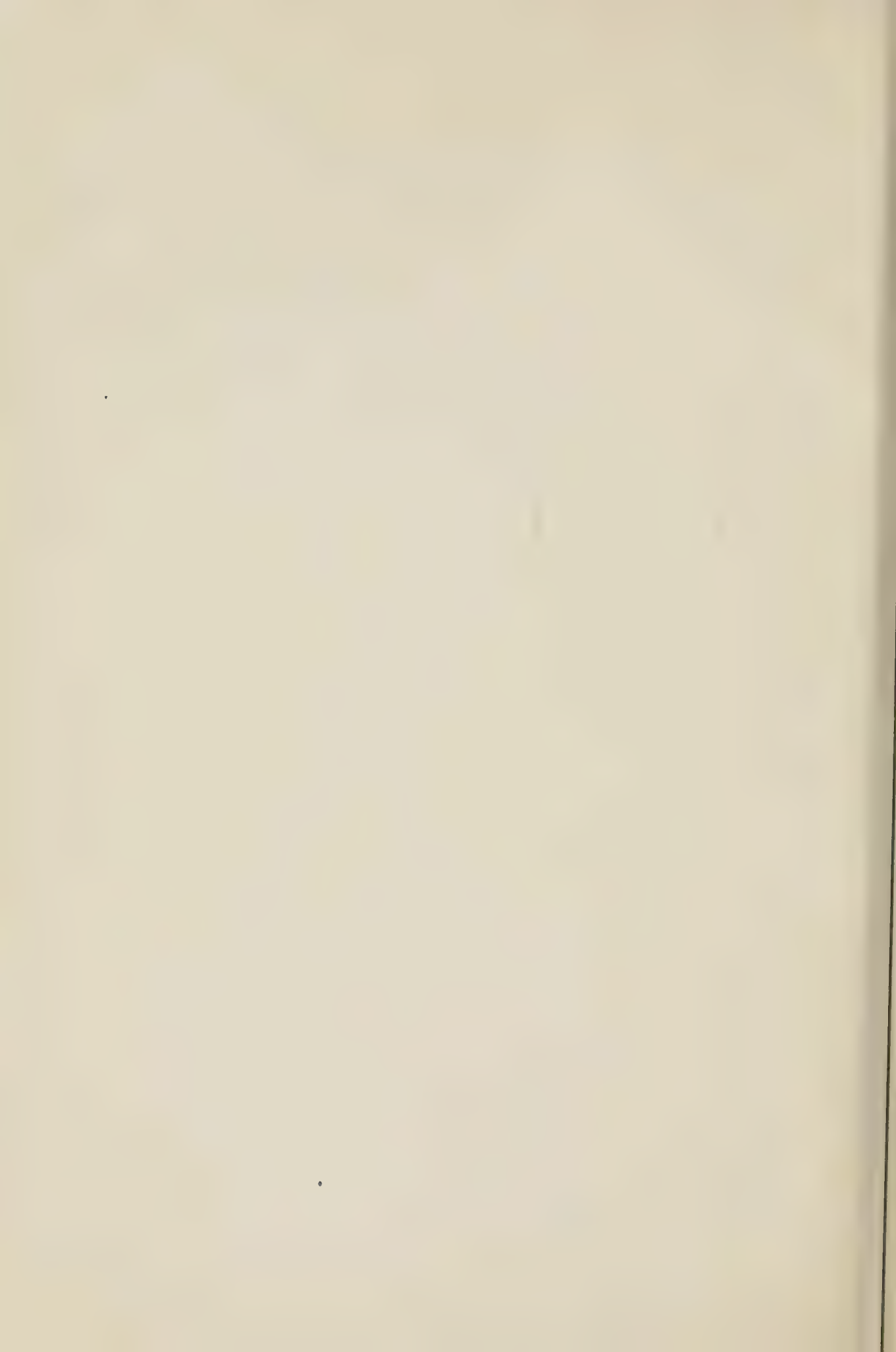
to-day are many and able. Their work will be found exhibited in most of the European salons. Some of them follow historical subjects, and others are infected with the craze for symbolical representation, which no one understands unless a key accompanies it. Melancholy subjects have influenced the painters as well as the poets, and the horrors of exiles are frequently portrayed.

The Polish soul is musical; its notes are characterized by sadness and melancholy. The same is true of Russian music, and it would seem that the physical characteristics of monotonous plains and a severe climate must have had a marked influence on the Slav nature. Infinite space and boundless landscape have left their indelible impression. The mysticism and fatalism inherited from the East can be readily traced in music as well as in costume and architecture. The tragedy of history has likewise had its effect. But beauty runs through even the most melancholy minor note. The Poles feel their music as well as play it, and this can always be noted in the renditions of their orchestras.

The most eminent Polish musician was Frederic François Chopin (1809-1849), whose mother was a Pole. The musician was born in Warsaw. His father was a Frenchman, which accounts for the French name. Although Chopin lived in Paris most of his life, he never forgot Poland, and her history inspired many of his compositions. He abandoned



FREDERIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN.



that country during the troubles of 1831, and his body still rests in a cemetery in Paris.

Ignace Jan Paderewski is the greatest living Polish musician, and was born in Podolia in 1860. He has made several tours through the United States, and his compositions are well known here. What position he will eventually be given, it is probably too early to predict. But it will undoubtedly be a very high one, and the Poles are naturally proud of this man, who is intensely Polish in his sympathies. His opera "Mauru" has received wide praise, and some of his shorter compositions have become household favourites. He lives in Switzerland the greater part of the time, and his home is always open to his fellow-countrymen. There are many other Polish composers, who are not quite so well known, and yet whose work will be heard throughout the entire civilized world.

One of the greatest of modern tragediennes is claimed by the Poles. Helena Modrzejewska, a name she afterwards changed to Modjeska, was one of the world's greatest actresses. She was born in Cracow in 1844, and was married at the early age of seventeen to a Polish actor, G. S. Modrzejewska, and soon left a widow. She afterwards married Charles Chlapowski, but was always known by the name of Modjeska. Her early reputation was made in her own country, but, becoming involved in trouble with the Russian government, the talented

young actress came to the United States in 1876, and attempted to establish a colony near Los Angeles. She studied English and went on the American stage. From here she went to London, and took the world's metropolis by storm. Her favourite *role* was Shakespearian characters, and her appearances in English were almost wholly confined to such plays. But in Polish her repertoire was extremely varied. She usually returned to Cracow every two years, playing there and in the other Polish cities, until Warsaw was finally denied her. These appearances were for the love of her people rather than financial remuneration, for the returns could not compare with the English or American stage. She maintained a splendid country home at Arden, near Los Angeles, where she spent the last few years of her life in practical retirement. She died in 1909, and her passing was mourned by all lovers of real drama. Madam Modjeska was gifted with great beauty in her younger days, and had a charming personality as well, which delighted those who knew her intimately. America is proud to claim her as an adopted daughter.

CHAPTER XX

THE POLES IN AMERICA

Early immigrants — Millions of American Poles — Chief centres — Agriculturists — Spirit of independence — Education — Frugality — Americanization — Idealism — Eminent American Poles — Polish press — Fraternal organizations — Educational institutions — The duty of Americans.

It was but natural that the Poles, being dissatisfied with alien rule, should seek new homes. Kosciuszko and Pulaski, who fought for liberty under the American flag, were but forerunners of an immense army of that nationality who have crossed the Atlantic and sought homes under the Stars and Stripes.

The revolutions of 1830 and 1863 in Russian Poland, the revolution of 1846 in Austrian Poland, and that of 1848 in Germany, each started a fresh impetus of emigrants. The total numbers who came in these early migrations, however, were very small when compared with the hordes of Polish immigrants who have come in the last twenty years. The greatest incoming of Poles has been since the Russian revolution of 1905. The dissatisfaction with the government, and the industrial depression resulting from the disturbed political conditions in the Russian Empire, were both contributing causes.

Some Poles have gone to South America and sought new homes in Brazil and Argentina, where they have become successful agriculturalists; a few Polish colonies will be found in Western Canada and in Canadian cities; but the number who have located either in Canada or South America is small in comparison with those who have landed and established homes on the shores of the United States.

It is estimated by a conservative Polish authority that to-day there are about two and a half million Poles living in the United States, although some authorities place the number as high as three millions. Each year the number increases. The government statistics are not very reliable, as Poles and Polish Jews have been confused by the enumerators. Some have likewise been classed either as Austrians, Russians, or Germans, because of the government to which they formerly owed allegiance. As a rule, these immigrants have come from the peasant class, with occasionally a few of the impoverished nobles, for those who have means prefer to stay at home and enjoy the luxury of existence in the land of their fathers, on soil pregnant with the noble deeds of their ancestors, even if they are without the enjoyment of political liberty. More have come from Austrian Poland than the German sections, for, although there is greater political freedom in Austria than Germany, the industrial conditions in Galicia are not nearly so good. In

some instances almost entire villages of Galicia have migrated to this side of the Atlantic. At the present time about fifty per cent. of the Poles in the United States are from Russia, while thirty and twenty per cent. respectively were formerly Austrian and German subjects.

Some of the Poles return to their former homes after a few years in this country, but that number is only a very small per cent. More frequently the father comes across as a vanguard, and in a few months or years the rest of his little company follows. We can hardly appreciate the mingled feelings of hope and fear that fill the breasts of these Polish immigrants as the vessel on which they travel approaches New York. Tragedies are of almost daily occurrence at Ellis Island, when some child, or perhaps the wife, is rejected because of trachoma or some other affliction. Those who do return to their former homes have usually given to the New World the best years of their lives; they go back to Europe only after the years have begun to tell, or an accident has crippled them. A few send back a portion of their earnings to relatives left behind, but the Polish immigrants have probably brought in as much wealth to the land of their adoption as they send away.

By far the greater part of the Polish immigrants centre in our cities, although at home they are agriculturalists. The prospect of wages on the Amer-

ican standard in the cities is so alluring that it overcomes their natural love of the soil. Most of them start in as common labourers on the streets, on the railroad tracks, or in factories, but even the wages of unskilled labour here seem very large to them. In the last few years, however, there has been a trend landwards. When a little money has been accumulated the Pole seeks some cheap land, so that he may again become a tiller of the soil. In Connecticut and other parts of New England they are buying up abandoned farm lands and making them pay. In Iowa, Ohio, and Wisconsin settlements of Poles will be found on the least desirable land. They buy this land because it is cheap, and they turn to profit soil that the American would pass by with disgust. They have been used to hard and patient toil, they live frugally, and they are satisfied with smaller returns for their labour. This class of Poles deserves every encouragement that can be given them.

In Chicago there are more Poles than in any other city in the world, with the exception of Warsaw, and possibly Lodz. The number has been estimated as high as a quarter of a million, but this number is probably too high, as Lithuanians have been classed with the Poles. Greater New York has the next largest Polish colony, with Pittsburg third, and Philadelphia, Buffalo, Milwaukee and Detroit following along closely. Cleveland has a colony of

forty thousand or more Poles, and in Toledo there are in excess of twenty-five thousand persons of Polish birth. In the extreme west and in the southern states, with the exception of Texas, the Polish population is comparatively small, as they are gathered in the great industrial centres of the eastern and north-central states. Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Massachusetts, Ohio, and New Jersey each contain a fairly large Polish population.

Wherever you find a Polish colony, you will find it centred around a great and imposing Roman Catholic Church. The Poles of the New World, like their countrymen of the Old, are devoted adherents of this Church, and their life usually centres around it. Thus you will find here the Polish priest to be a man of great influence with his flock. Something is needed to neutralize to some extent at least the effects of the many saloons which are sure to be found in the same neighbourhood. The young Poles are surely becoming more independent in their religious belief. They frequently resent what they consider the arbitrary actions of the Church authorities in removing an old or appointing a new priest. It is an outcropping of that spirit of independence which has characterized the Poles throughout their entire history. These differences have led to the formation of an independent Catholic Church, which has no fewer than sixty-five congregations. Many

openly proclaim themselves as of no religious faith whatsoever, while some have yielded to mission work conducted by Protestant missionaries.

The majority of the Polish children attend the parochial schools of the Church, at least during their first school years, although many will be found in the public schools as well, who have never attended a parochial institution. The children learn readily, for the Slav mind is open to impressions and quite keen in its perception. I have talked with teachers in the Polish districts, and they uniformly speak favourably of their Polish pupils. They seem eager to learn the American way of doing things. As a rule, the children are taken out of the school quite young, as the parents are anxious to add them to the list of wage-earners as early as possible. Some of the girls take positions as servants, but more will be found in the factories where girl help is employed. Many of the boys are apprenticed to various trades. This is unfortunate in many respects, for it certainly hinders the racial development; but we must remember that the greater number of Poles work at common labour, or in the lower priced factory positions, and families are generally large, so that, with the high cost of living, it is necessary for the family income to be increased as much as possible.

It seems to be the aim of nearly every Polish American to own a home as soon as possible. They

are, as a rule, industrious and frugal, and live economically. The wives add to the family income by doing washing and scrubbing in addition to caring for the several children. If permitted, a few geese will be raised by the housewife. Most of the Poles do not remain renters very long, but as soon as they have saved up a little money they purchase a home on the instalment plan. Many buy a home even before they learn to speak the language — for they soon learn the value of a dollar. It is not long, in most cases, until the home is paid for, and then the family live in a cottage, which is generally modest, and oftentimes cheaply built; but it is at least their own property. Many of these cottages do not contain more than four or five rooms for the accommodation of a numerous family, but the same number would live in two rooms beneath a thatched roof in the land of their birth. Few Polish families will be found who do not have at least a little ready cash laid away somewhere in the home to be used for emergency. The stocking is a more likely receptacle than a bank. In this way they show a thrift which is commendable, and might be taken as a lesson for some of those who are born of purely American parents. Earning the wages of a common labourer, these Poles will frequently save more money than native Americans whose income is two or three times as great, and, as an additional burden, they have the expense of a much larger family.

They purchase few luxuries until their financial condition warrants what to them seems such an extravagance.

The Poles as a rule acquire English quite readily, even if most of the older ones never learn to talk it without a very marked accent. The children, however, even of immigrant parents, will be found to prefer English to the Polish. One can notice this in any Polish community, where a group of children may be seen who will address their elders and parents in Polish, but among themselves always use English. I have attended Polish entertainments where all the exercises were in that language, and yet the conversation going on around among the younger people was almost entirely in English. Young people, who have just declaimed or sung in Polish, join groups and immediately begin to converse in English, although all understand the Polish just as well. This is a convincing proof that Americanization proceeds rapidly among the Poles, and that eventually the Polish language will become unknown among the younger ones.

With the dropping of their language also will disappear the affection of the Poles for Poland as an entity, and their patriotism will become only a tradition. So long as a steady stream of emigration comes in, however, the language will remain, as no people are more jealous of their tongue. Polish is taught in all the parochial schools, and some Polish

leaders are endeavouring to have it taught in the public schools situated in the Polish districts. The trend is nevertheless inevitable. Even among those who use Polish almost exclusively, English words will be noticed, for there are many new terms constantly arising for which there are no Polish equivalents; and then a fair quantity of American slang is sure to be mingled with the purer Polish. As soon as immigration slackens, the Americanization will proceed even more rapidly, as the ties binding those here with their compatriots in the homeland become weaker.

I have talked to many American Poles, and there is an interesting stream of philosophy that runs through their conversation. The Poles have always been noted as idealists, and those characteristics can readily be recognized in their conversation. There is also an element of ambition among them, and one will always find plenty of petty politicians and embryo statesmen among them. It is always an easy matter to get a crowd out to a political meeting in a Polish community. Those present do not hesitate to openly express either their approval or disapproval of what the speakers say. In any community where there are Poles in a great number you will find some of that nationality holding municipal positions, either in the city council or some of the departments. A few Poles have reached positions in the state, and have made very creditable

officials. In fact, in the history of nearly every department of our government, Polish names will be found.

Leopold Julian Boeck was an eminent educator, and laid plans for what is said to have been the first polytechnic institution in the United States. He was a member of the faculties of the University of Virginia and the University of Pennsylvania, and was honoured by President Grant with an appointment to an educational commission. Edmund Louis Gray Zalinski, who is claimed by some as a Pole, served during the Civil War in the Union forces, and invented the pneumatic torpedo gun. He retired from the army in 1892, and died in 1909. He was from Russia. There were many other Poles who served in the Civil War, both as officers and in the ranks. One of these was Dr. Henry Kalussowski, who served with honour during the war and filled several departmental positions after its close until his death in 1894, at the ripe age of eighty-eight. He had taken an active part in the affairs of his own country before expatriating himself, and was expelled by Prussia for his part in a revolutionary movement. Dr. Mary Elizabeth Zakrzewska became quite a celebrated woman physician before her death. John F. Smulski was at one time treasurer of Illinois, but is now a prominent banker of Chicago. Ralph Modjeska, son of the famous actress, is one of the leading bridge engineers of the

country. He was born in Cracow, the ancient capital.

There are more than half a hundred Polish newspapers published in the United States, of which nine are dailies. A number of these are very creditable periodicals. They will be found in Chicago, in New York, in Milwaukee, in Detroit, in Buffalo, in Toledo, and in a number of other cities. The *Dziennik Chicagoski* and the *Dziennik Narodowy*, both of Chicago, have the largest circulation among the dailies, while the *Kuryer Polski*, of Milwaukee, the *Dziennik dla Wszyotkich*, of Buffalo, and the *Echo Polski* of Toledo are among the leaders of the Polish press in their respective communities. Of the weeklies the *Ameryka Echo*, of Toledo, probably has the largest circulation, while the *Zgodo, Narod Polski*, and *Gazeta Katolicka*, of Chicago, the *Wiarus*, of Winona, Minn., and the *Patryota*, of Philadelphia, each have a large circulation.

A number of the editors of these Polish periodicals have been quite noted men in Polish circles, and have contributed a great deal toward maintaining and cultivating the Polish nationality and language. Mr. A. A. Paryski, of Toledo, publisher of the *Ameryka Echo* and *Echo Polski*, has the largest Polish printing establishment in the United States, possibly in the entire world, from which as many as three million books and pamphlets are issued each year. These productions range from reprints

of Polish authors to the Constitution of the United States or the Declaration of Independence, translated into Polish. The total output of Polish literature is so large that it speaks well for the intellectual craving among the Poles. The writer is indebted to Mr. Paryski for some of the data and other information contained in this chapter.

There are a number of fraternal organizations among the American Poles. The best known is probably the Polish National Alliance, with headquarters in Chicago. It is not a secret order, but has lodges in many cities and maintains a system of fraternal insurance. It has a military organization also, and interests itself in education. Through its efforts a statue has been erected to Kosciuszko on Lafayette Square, Washington. At its headquarters has been gathered a collection of books in the Polish and Lithuanian languages that numbers many thousands. Perhaps not more than one or two larger collections can be found anywhere. The Falcons is another order which is rapidly spreading among the young people. It aims to interest the young Poles in the better things of life, very much after the methods of the Young Men's Christian Association. Literary and musical organizations are encouraged, and in every way possible its aims are to develop the ethical side of human nature. Its methods and aims are of the very best, and the good results can already be traced.

There are a number of Polish colleges in the United States. The best known is the Seminaryum Polski, of Detroit, in which several hundred students are enrolled. This was established by the Rev. Joseph Dombrowski, a cultured Polish priest. St. Stanislaus College, in Chicago, St. John's College, in Philadelphia, are also very creditable institutions. Other educational institutions are located at Erie, Pennsylvania, Cambridge Springs, Massachusetts, and Berlin, Canada. These educational institutions are a good indication that the spirit of the New World, a desire for the improvement of the individual, has permeated our Polish fellow-citizens, along with other nationalities.

One thing that Americans must learn is to welcome these new arrivals to our shores, so long as the gates are open to immigration. If they are to be fellow citizens, then we want them to be good citizens. We must lend them not only a sympathetic but a helping hand as well. Instead of looking down upon these Slavs, to whom liberty has heretofore been denied, and who seek new homes in a land where freedom reigns, we should encourage them in every good effort being made. Few of the Poles are idlers, most of them work hard, and there is much work to be done in our rapidly progressing country.

THE END.

APPENDICES

I

Suggestions to Travellers

ALL sections of Poland are quite accessible to travellers. A start can be made either from Berlin or Vienna. There is direct railroad communication from Vienna to Moscow, which passes through Cracow, Lemberg, and Kiev, and this main line branches just before reaching Cracow on the way to Warsaw and St. Petersburg. From Berlin one can take the direct route to St. Petersburg, through Warsaw and Vilna, or he can take through trains from Berlin to Kiev and Odessa, which pass through Cracow and Lemberg. Between Cracow, Warsaw and Posen there is also direct service. Hence it is an easy matter for any one who wishes to visit Poland to stop at any or all of these interesting cities when on his way to or from the most important sections of Russia. The railroad accommodation will be found very comfortable, although the Russian trains are generally rather slow. On the international trains sleeping coaches and restaurant cars of the International Sleeping Car Company will generally be found.

For any one who has not a knowledge of the Polish language the German is probably the most useful, although French will be found a great aid, especially in Warsaw. In the leading hotels, in the important Polish cities, some one will probably be found who can speak English, but German will be sure to be spoken. Many of the Poles understand that language, and nearly all of the Jews, at least those in business, can understand it and make themselves understood in that tongue. Comfortable hotels will be found in all the leading cities, and the prices are not excessive.

The money question is rather a troublesome one, like it is in all parts of Europe. In Austria the standard is the kroner, of the same value as the franc. In Germany the unit is the mark, which equals in value the English shilling. The rouble of Russia is worth almost fifty-two cents in American money. The kroner is divided into one hundred heller, the mark into one hundred pfennig, and the rouble is similarly divided into kopecks. There are good banks in all the cities and the traveller will have no difficulty with the ordinary forms of exchange used in all parts of Europe.

If one wishes to visit Russia, it is absolutely necessary to provide himself with a passport, and have it viséed before entering that country. The best plan is to have this visé by the Consul General of Russia, who is stationed in New York, and there are

then no further formalities to be gone through with until the Russian border is reached. It will be stamped by the officials on the border where the traveller enters, and the passport is good for six months from that date, without any additional official action. The passport will be called for at each town where a stop is made, and, when one wishes to leave the country, it is necessary to so inform the officials at the last stop, when a permit to cross the border will be granted. A small charge is made at each town, but the formalities are usually attended to by the hotel employees, so that the traveller has no inconvenience in connection with it.

II

The Pacta Conventa

EACH elected king of Poland was obliged to subscribe to the *pacta conventa*, and to make oath that he would obey each and every provision of it. This instrument thus became a sort of written constitution guaranteeing liberty to the people, and particularly to the nobility. The form of the *pacta conventa* varied, and additional provisions were usually inserted whenever a new king was elected. The principal articles of this *pacta conventa*, as it existed in the time of the Saxon kings, are as follows:

That the kingdom shall be maintained in the right of electing its sovereign, and never become hereditary.

No king shall be elected who is not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, and does not swear to continue in the same communion.

Liberty of conscience shall continue inviolable.

The queen shall not intermeddle in any affairs of state.

No foreign troops shall be introduced into the kingdom without the concurrence of the Republic.

Only gentlemen of considerable fortunes shall be employed in the embassies.

No person shall hold two considerable offices, such as marshal and general, at the same time.

No new economy shall be introduced at the king's table, but the ancient shall be exactly observed.

No person shall be qualified for naturalization who has not rendered important services to the Republic.

The king's court and guard shall be composed of natives of the kingdom.

If the king marries, he shall take the advice of the Senate, in the choice of his consort. If she be a stranger, she shall not have above six foreigners in her court.

Only the Latin and Polish languages shall be used in the king's letters.

The ancient liberties of the palatinates shall remain inviolable.

A general Diet is to be convened every two years, or oftener if it is necessary.

The duration of each Diet shall not exceed six weeks.

All the privileges of the Universities of Cracow and other cities, as well ecclesiastical as secular, and all articles agreed upon oath at the coronation of the kings Henry, Stephen Batory, Sigismund, Wladislas, John Casimir, and others, shall be renewed; and in case of violation the inhabitants of Poland and Lithuania shall be free and discharged from all obedience.

III

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INDEX

- Adalbert, St., 24, 25, 201.
 Agriculture, 219, 224, 266.
 Alexander, 44.
 Alexander I, 145, 147, 154, 157, 192, 217.
 Alexander II, 162.
 Alexander III, 232.
 Alexandrovo, 199, 222.
 Alphabet, 6.
 Americanization of Poles, 330-331.
 Archbishop, the, 9.
 Aristocracy, 244 *et seq.*
 Argentina, 324.
 Armenians, 18, 220.
 Art, 302 *et seq.*
 Aryans, 18.
 Astronomy, 305.
 Augustus II, 15, 80-83, 86-87.
 Augustus III, 90-91.
 Austria, 3, 94, 96, 139, 156, 161, 162, 167, 170, 206, 212 *et seq.*, 237, 286.
 Baltic Provinces, 31, 207.
 Banquets, 255.
 Bar, Confederation of, 109, 111.
 Barbarism, 254-255.
 Bartholomew, St., Massacre of, 5.
 Batory, Stephen, 53-57, 169.
 Beggars, 171, 279.
 Berlin, 183, 199.
 Bialolenski, 160.
 Bibliography, 342-343.
 Bismarck, Prince, 206, 210.
 Black Sea, 121.
 Boeck, Leopold, 332.
 Bohemians, 303.
 Boleslaw I, 5, 25-27.
 Boleslaw II, 5, 28-29, 172.
 Boleslaw III, 30.
 Boleslaw IV, 31.
 Brazil, 324.
 Brody, 288.
 Bromberg, Province of, 200.
 Bronislaw, 148.
 Bug River, 124.
 Bulgarians, 6.
 Bund, the, 296.
 Burghers, the, 9.
 Canada, 324.
 Carnival, 261-262.
 Carpathian Mountains, 167, 271-272.
 Casimir, John, 62-66, 277.
 Casimir I, 28-29.
 Casimir II, 31.
 Casimir III, the Great, 33-35, 172.
 Casimir IV, 42-43.
 Castellans, the, 15.
 Catherine the Great, 92-93, 99, 101, 103, 107, 119, 121, 122, 126, 141.
 Censorship, Russian, 228-229.
 Characteristics, 7, 226, 259, 320.
 Charles XII, King of Sweden, 82-83.
 Cheder, the, 299.
 Chicago, 326.
 Chocim, 70.
 Chopin, F. F., 320.
 Christianity, Conversion to, 23.
 Chroniclers, early, 22.
 Church, the, 8, 113, 170-171, 283, 306, 327.
 Churches, 194, 276.
 Classes, 8.
 Cleveland, 326.
 Colonization Commission, 208-209.
 Confederation, a, 12.
 Constitution, new, 16, 119.

- Copernicus, Nikolaus, 2, 187, 305-306.
 Corruption, 11.
 Cossacks, 54-55, 60, 63, 184.
 Costumes, 225, 257, 267, 273.
 Courland, 87, 223, 285.
 "Court," the, of nobles, 250-251.
 Courts, 193.
 Courtiers, 249, 251.
 Cracow, University of, 168.
 Cracow, 20, 32, 136, 147, 162, 166 *et seq.*, 204, 219, 275, 286, 289, 303, 317.
 Crimean War, 162.
 Crosses, 225.
 Customs, 195, 263, 288.
 Czartoryski, the, 91, 99, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106, 114, 131, 158, 160.
 Czartoryski Museum, 175.
 Czechs, the, 6, 213.
 Czentochowa, 230, 277-279.

 Dancing, 261.
 Dantzig, 17, 42, 46, 98, 206, 305.
 Decadence, 13-14, 121, 306.
 Diet, the, 9, 10, 43, 48, 76, 97, 104, 117, 127-129, 158; the Dumb, 129; the Four Years', 117.
 Dissidents, the, 60, 87, 107, 138.
 Divorce, 292.
 Dmitri, the false, 58.
 Dombrowski, J. H., 151.
 Dorpat, 207.
 Dresden, 91.
 Drinking, 195, 256.
 Drinking-cups, 256-257.
 Dubienka, battle of, 124.
 Duma, 234.

 Earlocks, the, 280.
 Easter, 262, 270-271.
 Education, 115, 227, 255, 328, 335; of Jews, 299-301.
 England, 98.
 Estates, 260.
 Extravagance, 245-248, 251-254.

 Falcons, the, 334.
 Families, 258.
 Florian Gate, 175.
 Food, 266.
 Foreign troops, 15-16.
 Four Years' Diet, 117.
 France, 98, 145.
 Franklin, Benjamin, 133.
 Frederick William, Emperor, 122, 123, 126.
 Frederick the Great, 93-94, 96, 103, 114, 119.
 Frugality of peasants, 328.

 Galicia, 33, 150, 215, 218, 271, 324, 325.
 Gallus, Martin, 303.
 Gardens, the Saxon, 192.
 Gedimin, 38-39, 240.
 Geese, 166, 329.
 Genealogies, 258.
 Geography, 1 *et seq.*
 Germany, 3, 199 *et seq.*, 227, 237, 282.
 Ghetto, the, 188, 289.
 Gnesen, 23, 26, 200, 281.
 Goorals, the, 272-274.
 Grodno, 10, 126, 127, 141, 223.
 Grochov, 160.
 Gröttger, Arthur, 319.
 Grünwald, battle of, 41.

 Halat, the, 294.
 Hanseatic League, 42.
 Hedwiga, 35.
 Henry, 49-53.
 Holidays, 270.
 Holy Synod, 192, 237.
 Hospitality, 253, 261.
 Hungarians, 213, 214.
 Huss, John, 2, 214.

 Ibianny, 164.
 Idealism, 7, 331.
 Individualism, 7, 8, 218, 327.
 Interregnums, 53.
 Invasions, 18.
 Ivan the Great, 44.
 Ivan the Terrible, 54.

 Jadwiga, 35, 41.
 Jagiello, 5, 36, 39-41.
 Jagiello Library, 175.
 Jefferson, Thomas, 144.[†]
 Jesuits, 56, 86, 113; influence of, 20.
 Jews, 19, 34, 177, 179, 180, 188-189, 201, 240, 242, 280 *et seq.*

- John Albert, 43.
Joseph II, 95.
- Kahal, the, 284-285.
Karaites, 301.
Kiev, 79, 223.
Kings, election of, 10, 48, 174.
Kishinev, 292, 293.
Knights, Teutonic, 32, 45.
Kollataj, 306.
Königsburg, 199.
Korybut, Michael, 67-68.
Kosciuszko, Thaddeus, 2, 115, 124, 131 *et seq.*, 152, 169, 187, 285, 334.
Koshanovski, John, 304.
Krasinska, Countess, 90, 248-249.
Krasinski, Sigismund, 311-312.
Kremlin, the, 229.
Krukowiecki, General, 161.
- Labor Unions, 233.
Landscape, 225.
Language, 6, 203, 209, 218, 228, 330, 338.
Latin, 34, 303.
Laws, 25.
Lazienki Park, 192.
Legends, 302-303.
Leipzig, battle of, 155.
Lelewal, the historian, 314.
Lemberg, 209, 219, 221, 268, 289.
Letts, 37.
Liberum Veto, the, 8, 11-12, 44, 64, 90, 106.
Lithuania, 16, 37 *et seq.*, 76, 141, 154, 159, 223, 239, 243, 308, 312.
Literature, 218, 302 *et seq.*
Lodz, 191, 230, 237.
London, 288.
Louis of Hungary, 35.
Lwow, *see* Lemberg.
Lutherans, 20.
- Maceiowice, battle of, 139.
Magyars, 254.
Malachowski, 104.
Malazewski, Anton, 309.
Manufacturing, 230.
Maria Theresa, 94-95.
Mariavites, the, 235-237.
Marie Louise, Queen, 62, 65.
Marriage, 244, 263, 267.
Marriage brokers, 291.
Markets, 177-179.
Matejko, Jan, 204, 319.
Mickiewicz, Adam, 177, 309, 313.
Mieczyslaw I, 5, 23-25.
Mieczyslaw II, 27.
Mieczyslaw III, 31, 281.
Mindvog, 38.
Mir, the, 247.
Modjeska, Helena, 176, 315, 321-322, 332.
Mohammedanism, 214.
Mokranowski, 104.
Money, 338.
Moscow, 59, 154, 155, 186, 221, 229.
Music, 320-321.
Mustapha, Kara, 71.
Mykva, the, 291.
- Nagaika, the, 185.
Napoleon, 145, 150-156, 241.
Napoleon III, 162, 313.
Narva, 82.
National League, the, 233.
Neiss, 95.
Newspapers, 317-319; in United States, 333.
New York, 288, 301, 325, 326.
Nicholas I, 159.
Nicholas II, 234.
Niemcewicz, Julian, 308.
Nijni Novgorod, 187.
Nobles, 14, 219, 244 *et seq.*
Nuremberg, 306.
- Odessa, 183, 221, 292, 293.
Ohio, 327.
Olgerd, 39.
Orthodox Church, 20, 235.
Orzechowski, 304.
- Pacta Conventa, the, 49, 81, 340.
Paderewski, Ignace Jan, 321.
Palatines, the, 246, 254.
Pale of Settlement, the, 292.
Pan-Germanism, 206-207, 215.
Pan-Slavism, 207, 215.
"Pans," the, 247.
Partitions, 16; the first, 98; the second, 130; the third, 141.
Paryski, A. A., 333.
Passover, the, 293.
Passports, 222, 231, 238, 338-339.

- Patriotism, Polish, 20-21.
 Paul I, 50, 142.
 Peasants, 224, 227, 247-248, 265
 et seq.
Peasy, the, or earlocks, 280.
 Perkun, 38, 40.
 Peter III, 102.
 Peter the Great, 82, 84, 85.
 Philadelphia, 326, 335.
 Photographing, 189.
 Piasts, the, 23, 35, 66.
 Pilgrimages, 277-279.
 Planté, the, 175.
 Podolia, 109, 271.
 Pogroms, the, 293, 296.
 Poland, Kingdom of, 223 *et seq.*
 Poles, emigration of, 149.
 Poles, origin of, 5.
 Poles in United States, 169.
 Polish Legions, the, 151, 154, 155.
 Polish National Alliance, 334.
 Poltava, 85.
 Poniatowski, Joseph, 123, 124,
 126, 135, 155.
 Posen, 20, 22, 27, 152, 168, 201-
 204, 211, 282, 283, 317.
 Potocki, the, 114, 116, 122, 123.
 Poverty, 14-15, 167, 279.
 Praga, 140, 160, 185, 193, 285.
 Prague, 25.
 Priests, 276.
 Protestants, 19-20.
 Pulawy, 100.
 Printing, introduction of, 43.
 Prussia, 32, 33, 94, 96, 122, 128,
 138, 150, 156.
 Prussians, the, 26, 42.
 Pulaski, Casimir, 109-111.
 Pushkin, Alexander, 4, 310.

 Rabbinat, the, 298.
 Rabbis, 285, 298.
 Races in Poland, 18.
 Raclawice, battle of, 137, 148.
 Radom, 44.
 Radzewill, Prince, 160.
 Reformation, the, 46, 57, 275,
 303.
 Reichsrath, the Austrian, 213,
 214.
 Reichstag, 204.
 Rej, Nicholas, 303.
 Religion, 19-20, 86, 171, 194, 216,
 260, 274-279; of Jews, 296-301.

 Reval, 207.
 Revolutions, 233.
 Riga, 207.
 Russia, 4, 20, 93, 96, 104, 128,
 135, 183, 184, 223 *et seq.*, 286,
 291-294; revolution of 1830,
 159-161; of 1863, 162-165.
 Russians, the, 6, 265.
 Russo-Japanese War, 233.
 Ruthenians, 212.
 Rye, 224.
 Rynek, the, 176, 177.

 St. Petersburg, 96, 101, 141, 142,
 183, 225.
 Salt, mines of, 215-217.
 Sarbinewski, Casimir, 304.
 Schools, 221.
 Seythes, 224.
 Serfdom, 8.
 Senate, the, 9.
 Shadchan, the, 291.
 Sienkiewicz, Henryk, 63, 234, 278,
 314-317.
 Sigismund I, 45.
 Sigismund II Augustus, 45-47,
 169, 172.
 Sigismund III, 57-61, 186.
 Silesia, 31.
 Skarga, Peter, 304-305.
 Slavs, the, 6, 204, 213, 274.
 Slowacki, Julius, 310-311.
 Smolensk, 79, 223.
 Smulski, John F., 332.
 Sobieski, John, 2, 67, 79, 151, 173,
 196, 220.
 Stanislaus II, 99 *et seq.*, 174, 192;
 abdication of, 141-142.
 Stanislaus, St., 29, 172.
 Stanislaus Leszczyński, 83-85,
 87-89.
 Stare Miasto, 187.
 Strikes, 232-234, 296.
 Sukiennice, the, 176.
 Suvarov, General, 139, 140.
 Sweden, 58, 64, 82, 277.
Szlachta, the, 247.

 Talmud, the, 290, 291, 299.
 Targowice, 123.
 Tartars, 53.
 Tatra, 271-274.
 Teuton, the, 204.
 Teutonic Knights, 205.

- Texas, 327.
Theatre, the, 176, 220, 321-322.
Thorn, 44, 46, 86, 200, 222.
Toledo, 327, 333.
Toleration, Religious, 19, 46.
Travelling, 337-338.
- Ukraine, the, 79, 85, 116, 221, 303.
Uniates, the, 60, 161.
United States, 144, 231, 301; Poles in, 323 *et seq.*
Utopia, a, 13.
- Vengrov, 164.
Vienna, 71-74, 89, 156, 166, 206, 337; Congress of, 156.
Villages, 268, 269, 288.
Vilna, 39, 154, 225, 241-243.
Vistula River, 17, 169, 183.
Vitovt, 40.
Vladimir, 302.
Vola, the, 139, 161.
Voltaire, 92, 93.
- Wages, 230.
Wawel, the, 33, 78, 156, 169, 170, 172, 219.
- Warsaw, 10, 20, 39, 48, 68, 104, 112, 135, 139, 152, 157, 161, 162, 285, 289, 317; Grand Duchy of, 153-156.
Washington, General, 133.
Wealth, 251-254.
West Point, 134.
Wieliczka, salt mines of, 18, 215-217.
Wigs, 290.
Willanow, 77, 196-198.
William II, 202, 206.
Windmills, 225.
Wladislas the Short, 32-33.
Wladislas I, 30.
Wladislas II, 31.
Wladislas III, 41.
Wladislas IV, 59, 61-62, 186.
Women, 178, 179, 189, 204, 225, 262-264, 266-269; Jewish, 289-292.
- Yaroslav, 26, 28.
Yiddish, 298.
- Zalinski, E. L. G., 332.
Zamek, the, 163, 186, 187.
Zamoiski, Count, 163.
Zbaraz, 63.
Zgirz, 237.
Zielence, battle of, 124.

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